



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 2000). The prevalence of mental health problems has increased in the general population, and the incidence of mental health problems has increased in the prison population (Mental Health Foundation 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

34.38.81.20



Harvard College Library

FROM

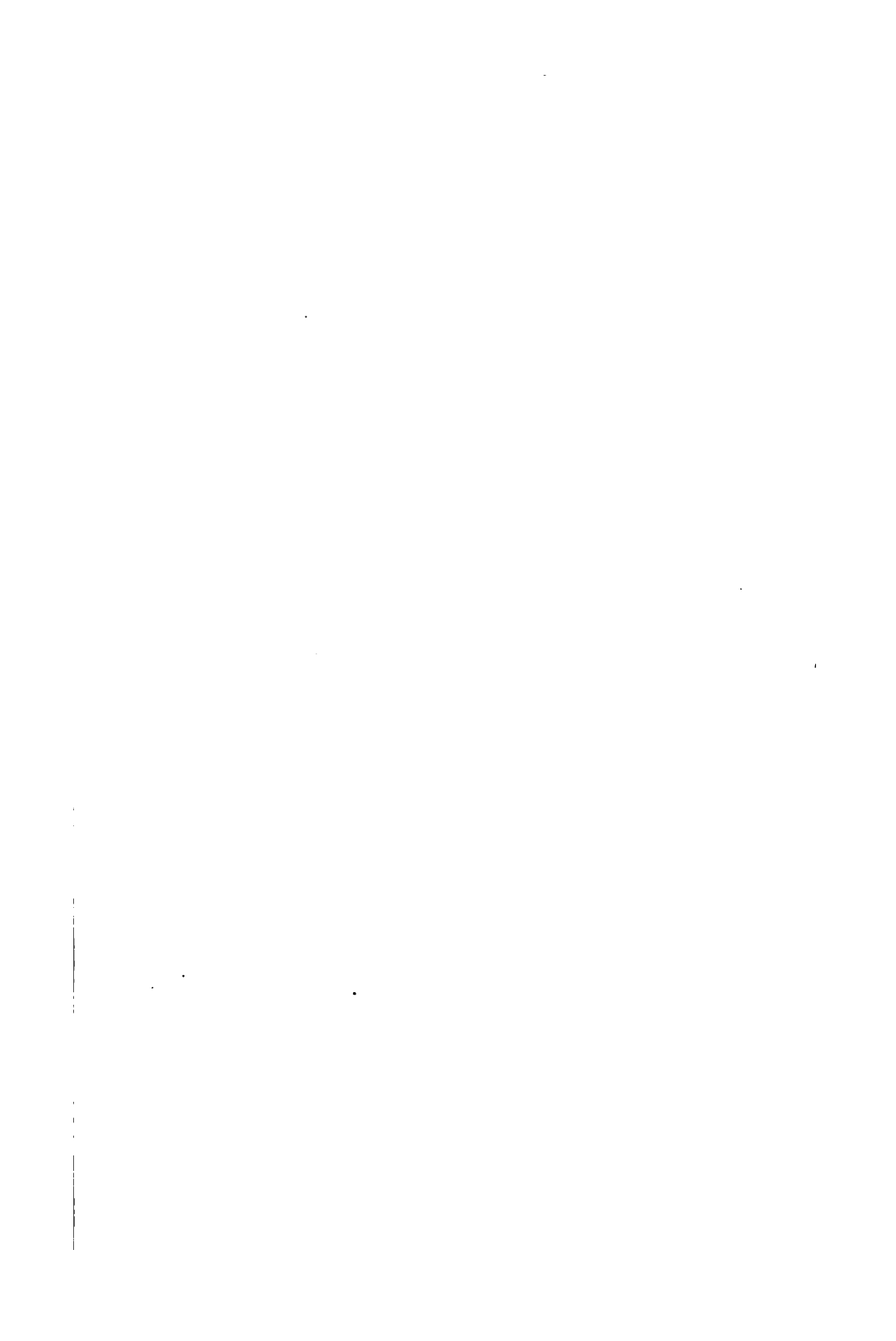
Estate of

Mrs. Herbert Lloyd

.....









LIFE,
LETTERS AND ESSAYS
OF
Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

VOL. I.



LETTERS
OF
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

ADDRESSED TO
RICHARD HENGIST HORNE

WITH A PREFACE AND MEMOIR
BY
RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

NEW YORK
WORTHINGTON CO., 747 BROADWAY
1889

23438.31.20

✓

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT,

1877,

By JAMES MILLER.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1880, by
WORTHINGTON CO.,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PREFACE

NEARLY sixteen years have passed since the death of Mrs. Browning; and her Life still remains to be written. We know less of her than of any other English woman of genius, the sum of our knowledge consisting of the dates of the publication of her writings, the years of her birth and death, and a few references to her in magazine articles. Her life was uneventful, no doubt; but surely it was worth relating: and it will be related, well or ill, as surely as the life of Thackeray will. Posterity will insist upon knowing it, and materials will be forthcoming. Her letters exist among the literary remains of her correspondents; and it is to be regretted that they have not been collected. So, at least, thinks one of her early correspondents, Mr. Richard Hengist Horne, to whose care in preserving them, and whose skill in commenting upon them, we owe the present volume. The circumstances under which they were written are either explained in the letters themselves, or in the comments of Mr. Horne, a few particulars con-

cerning whom may interest American readers. He occupies a curious position among contemporary writers: his reputation is established, but his works are not read. He is as much out of print as Thomas Lovell Beddoes, and as seldom quoted in collections of verse. His life has been an adventurous one. He was born at London, in the third year of the present century, and was educated at Sandhurst College, in order to be trained for a military life. He left college with the expectation of entering into the service of the East India Company; but, being disappointed in this, he entered as a midshipman in the Mexican navy, which was then engaged in a struggle with that of Spain.

"Who ever saw a noble sight,
That never view'd a brave sea-fight?"

So sang Dryden, and so might sing Mr. Horne, who drank the delight of battle in his youth. When peace was restored, he returned to England by the way of the United States; and, finding his small patrimony wasted by his guardians, he entered upon the profession which demands the most and receives the least preparation, — that of a man of letters. I have not been able to trace the exact order in which his writings were published; for bibliography is in its infancy here and in England. The works by which he is best known are his tragedies, which were published in the following years: "Cosmo di

PREFACE.

Medici," 1837; "The Death of Marlowe," 1838, "Gregory the Seventh," 1840; and the miracle-play of "Judas Iscariot," in 1848. His epic of "Orion" was published in 1843, and, to show his opinion of the epical taste of his countrymen, was sold for one farthing a copy. There were two or three farthing editions, a penny one, and one, I think, at half a crown. Besides these ambitious productions, he wrote two children's books: "The History of a London Doll" and "The Good-Natured Bear," "The Death Fetch," "Exposition of the False Medium, and Barriers excluding Men of Genius from the Public," "The Poor Artist, or Seven Eyesights and One Object," and "The Dreamer and the Worker." He also wrote a Life of Napoleon, a volume of "Ballads and Romances," and edited "A New Spirit of the Age," and the "Spirit of Peers and People." He is the author of an Introduction to an English translation of Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature and Art," and was at one time editor of the "Monthly Repository," and a contributor to the "Church of England Quarterly" and the "New Literary Review." His choice of subjects embraced such diverse themes as Poetical Contrasts and Albertus Magnus, the Dramatic Mind of Europe, and Chinese Characteristics — I had nearly written Chinese Metaphysics, remembering the critic of the "Eatonsville Gazette," who combined his information on that knotty subject

by reading up in the Cyclopædia under the letters C. and M. Clearly Mr. Horne was an accomplished and industrious man of letters in his early manhood. His friends were such men as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, John Forster, and Lord Lytton, and such women as Mary Russell Mitford, Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, and Charlotte Brontë. He was a member of the famous company of amateurs who played at Devonshire House and elsewhere, for the Guild of Literature and Art, in "Not so Bad as we Seem;" his parts being that of the bully and duellist, *Colonel Flint*. This was in 1851. In 1852 he emigrated to the gold-fields of Australia, where he acted as Chief of the mounted police, and afterwards as Gold Commissioner. After an absence of seventeen years, he returned to England, and resumed his old and honorable profession. His place in English literature will be settled by those who shall follow us. He will always be interesting, I think, to the student, on account of his dramatic writings. He figures well among the band of poets who have striven in vain to revive the poetic drama of England. Constable, the painter, had a favorite saying, that no great thing was ever repeated; and he gave as instances in point, that there were no second Homeric epics and Shakspearian dramas. About a hundred years after the death of the great Master, the poets of the time, Addison.

Rowe, and a score of lesser versifiers, wrote poetic dramas which were highly thought of. They lived their little day, and were forgotten. About a century later, poetic dramas were written again. Coleridge wrote "Remorse;" Maturin, "Bertram;" Shelli, "Evadne;" Knowles, "Virginus;" Barry Cornwall, "Mirandola;" Milman, "Fazio;" Miss Mitford, "Rienzi;" and so on, say for twenty odd years, till Talfourd published "Ion;" Bulwer, "Richelieu;" Horne, his "Cosmo di Medici;" and Browning, "Pippa Passes." The English public was indulgent to these productions; and their writers thought that the good old poetic drama was flourishing once more. Not a bit of it. It lasted about thirty years at most, and is as dead to-day as Julius Cæsar. Mr. Tennyson may entertain himself by writing "Mary" and "Harold;" but they might as well have remained unwritten. They are too late. They are not good closet-plays even, which I think Horne's tragedies are, judging from extracts from them, which are distinguished by energy of thought, and vigor of expression. Such, in brief, has been the life, and such are the works, of Richard Hengist Horne, the earliest literary friend of Mrs. Browning, after Miss Mitford, and so far the only one who has considered her letters as a part of the world's heritage in her genius. Withheld for a long time, they would not have been published now, but for the sudden

discovery that they were beginning to fade. "Her graphic lines," he writes, "were in several instances on the borders of the vanishing-point." The notes to this edition of Mrs. Browning's Letters, with two or three exceptions, for which I am responsible, are by the editor of the English edition, Mr. S. R. Thompson Mayer.

R. H. S.



MEMOIR.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT was born at Hope End, near Ledbury, in 1809. Of her family I know nothing, except that it was wealthy. She is said to have given early proofs of genius, and to have received a learned education in her childhood. She attempted to write, both in prose and verse, at the age of ten, and made such progress that at the age of fifteen she was known among her friends as a writer. Her earliest volume, an "Essay on Mind," was published in her seventeenth year (1826). It was written in rhyme—the usual English heroic lines, which came into fashion with Dryden and went out with Pope—and, while it was not remarkable in a poetical point of view, it showed the marks of abundant read-

ing, and a just appreciation of the great names who ruled in the kingdom of mind which it celebrated, — Plato, Bacon, Locke, Bolingbroke, and Condillac. Among other pieces it contained a short poem, "To my Father on his Birthday."

"'Neath thy gentleness of praise,
My father! rose my early lays."

Of this volume, which is or will be one of the curiosities of literature, no trace exists in Mrs. Browning's later volumes.

The next six or seven years of her life were passed in severe study of the literature of Ancient Greece. Among her friends at this time, and for years afterward — in fact till his death, in 1848 — was Hugh Stuart Boyd, favorably known by his translations from the Greek. ("Select Passages of the Writings of St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Basil," 1806. "A Selection from the Poems and Writings of Gregory Nazianzen," 1814, &c.) They read their favorite authors together, or rather the young student

read to her old master, for he was blind. A reminiscence of the happy hours they passed together, communing with the mighty minds of old, may be found in Mrs. Browning's beautiful poem, "Wine of Cyprus," dedicated to Mr. Boyd, to whom she was indebted for her knowledge of that dainty vintage.

"I think of those long mornings
Which my thought goes far to seek,
When, betwixt the folio's turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.
Past the pane the mountain spreading,
Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,
While a girlish voice was reading
Somewhat low for al's and oi's."

She gives a list of the authors whom they studied, not forgetting "our Æschylus, the thunderous." Her next work, a translation from Æschylus, "Prometheus Bound, and Miscellaneous Poems," was published by Valpy in 1833. The "London Quarterly Review" characterized it as "a remarkable performance for a young lady, but not a good translation in and by itself. It is too fre-

quently uncouth without being faithful, and, under a pile of sounding words, lets the fire go out." Mrs. Browning herself considered it a failure, and entirely re-wrote it at a later period of her life. The Preface to the first edition of the "Prometheus" contained a handsome compliment to "the learned Mr. Boyd."

In 1836, or thereabout, she became acquainted with Miss Mitford, in whose charming volume, "Recollections of a Literary Life," we find a sketch of her as she then appeared. She was certainly, Miss Mitford declared, one of the most interesting persons that she had ever seen. Her figure was slight and delicate, with a shower of dark curls falling on either side of a most expressive face; large, tender eyes, richly fringed by dark eye-lashes; a smile like a sunbeam, and such a look of youthfulness, that Miss Mitford had some difficulty in persuading the friend in whose carriage she rode to see her at Chiswick, that this translatress of the "Prometheus," the authoress of the "Essay on

Mind," was old enough to be introduced into company! They saw much of each other during Miss Mitford's stay in town, and, in spite of the difference in their ages, became warm and close friends. They corresponded after Miss Mitford returned into the country ("her letters," she says, "being just what letters ought to be — her own talk put upon paper"), and once at least met at Miss Mitford's own house, probably at Three Mile Cross.

The next year Miss Barrett broke a blood-vessel upon the lungs. She was attended by her physician, Dr. Chambers, for over a twelvemonth at her father's house in Wimpole Street (No. 50), and, the blood-vessel not healing, he ordered her, on the approach of winter, to a milder climate. Her eldest brother, a brother in heart and talent worthy of such a sister, accompanied her to Torquay. She remained there nearly a twelvemonth, and derived much benefit from the mild sea-breezes of Devonshire. One fine summer morning her brother and a couple of young friends embarked on board a small sailing vessel for a

.

few hours' trip. Excellent sailors all of them, and familiar with the coast, they sent back the boatmen and undertook to manage the craft themselves. A few minutes after their embarkation, just as they were crossing the bar, the boat went down, and all who were in her perished. The bodies were never found. But all that year there were rewards offered for them on the corner houses of every village street, on every church door, and almost every cliff for miles and miles along the coast; rewards for their linen even — for any relic of the beloved dead!

This tragedy nearly killed Elizabeth Barrett. She was utterly prostrated by the horror and grief, and, in her morbid sensitiveness, blamed herself as being indirectly the cause of it. It was not until the following year that she could be removed in an invalid carriage, and by journeys of twenty miles a day, to her afflicted family and her London home. Her house at Torquay stood at the bottom of the cliffs, almost close to the sea, and she told Miss Mitford afterward that, during the whole winter,

the sound of the waves rang in her ears like the moans of one dying — a fitting chorus to her terrible tragedy.

She was not idle in her great affliction, which occurred, if I understand Miss Mitford's narrative rightly, in 1837; nor had she been in the season of convalescence which preceded it. In 1838, she published "The Seraphim and other Poems." The effect of her studies was seen in it; it was as Greek as the subject would admit, and she could make it. The next year another volume is set down to her by her biographers, "The Romaunt of the Page." As this poem, which has since taken its place in her collected works, is too short for a volume, it was probably only one of a number published at that time — the initial poem of a volume. It bears the mark of a different class of studies, and a wider and more human range of thought. It is not Greek, not classical, but an essay in the romantic school of art. To this period of her life, or certainly not much later, belong "The Lay of the Brown Rosary," and "The Rhyme of the Duchess May."

The letters of Miss Mitford are filled with allusions to Miss Barrett, whose genius she was among the first to discover. She wrote to her father from Russell Square on May 27, 1836, about a visit she had made to the giraffes and the diorama with Mr. John Kenyon, who, by the way, was a relative of Miss Barrett's: "A sweet young woman, whom we called for in Gloucester Place, went with us — a Miss Barrett — who reads Greek as I do French, and has published some translations from *Æschylus*, and some most striking poems. She is a delightful young creature; shy and timid and modest. Nothing but desire to see me got her out at all, but now she is coming to us to-morrow night also." A day later she wrote of her again: "She is so sweet and gentle, and so pretty, that one looks at her as if she were some bright flower; and she says it is like a dream that she should be talking to me, whose works she knows by heart." A month or two later she wrote to her friend the Rev. William Harness, from her residence at Three

Mile Cross, that Henry Cary (meaning the translator of Dante) declared to her that the notes to Miss Barrett's "Essay on Mind" contained allusions to books, as if known by everybody, which no young man of Oxford of his day had ever looked into. There was for ten years an interchange of letters between Miss Mitford and Miss Barrett, and it is to be hoped that the letters of the latter will one day be published. That they covered a wide range of reading is certain, from the answers that were written to them. Great was her distraction in the grief which overpowered her after the death of her brother. She read, read, read, to the wonderment of her physician. He could not understand her fondness for such hard books: so, not to pain him more than was necessary, she had a small edition of Plato bound to resemble a novel. She returned to London a confirmed invalid, and was confined to one large and commodious but darkened chamber in her father's house, and restricted from the society of all but her family and one or two devoted

friends. Miss Mitford frequently travelled five and forty miles to see her, and returned the same evening without entering another house. She read, Miss Mitford tells us, almost every book worth reading, in almost every language, and gave herself, heart and soul, to that poetry of which she seemed born to be the priestess. Among her acquirements in this dark period of sorrow and sickness was a thorough knowledge of Hebrew, which she studied for the sake of reading the Old Testament in the original. The result of her Greek and Hebrew affinities was seen in her next work, "The Drama of Exile." This was published in 1844, opening, if I remember rightly, the first of the two substantial volumes in which she had collected all she wished to preserve of her previous volumes — the first complete edition of her works. Here for the first time appeared her beautiful poem, "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," which was written, Miss Mitford tells us, in the incredible space of twelve hours! "And the writer was a delicate woman, a confirmed invalid,

just dressed and supported for two or three hours from her bed to her sofa, and so back again." Truly, these delicate, womanly souls have a world of inherent strength and vitality.

Among other modern poets mentioned by her in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" was Mr. Robert Browning, whose series of poems and plays, "Bells and Pomegranates," was then in the course of publication. The lines in which she referred to him and his works were as follows:—

"Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if
cut deep down the middle,
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined
humanity."

This compliment to his Muse touched Mr. Browning, and he called upon the poetess. By the blunder of a new servant he was shown up to her sick-chamber. What passed between them at their first interview has not been revealed; but the poet obtained permission to renew his visits.

The authenticity of this anecdote has been called in question, and perhaps justly. I give it on the authority of Mr. George S. Hillard, who was acquainted with the Brownings. For soon there were two poets of that name, Mr. Robert Browning, author of "Bells and Pomegranates," and Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, author of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," which proved a poetic prefiguration of her own. Her family were opposed to it, we are told, and to the marriage which followed in the autumn of 1846. The determined little woman persisted, however, and rose from her sick-bed to marry the man she loved, who carried her away to Italy. They settled at Florence in Casa Guidi, fit dwelling for poets. It has often been described, especially the room in which Mrs. Browning received her friends. Cosy, comfortable, elegant, it was a kind of ideal chamber, neither a library, nor a parlor, but a happy blending of both. There were old pictures on the walls in old frames: easy-chairs and lounges were scattered about, and along the walls

were large carved book-cases crammed with books in many languages, Greek, be sure, being among them. Dispose these as picturesquely as possible, and add to them innumerable little trifles, objects of art. bric-a-brac, &c., and you have a dim idea of the room in which Mrs. Browning wrote her poems. The contrast between it and her old sick-chamber in Wimpole Street was as great as the contrast between her life as a maiden, and her life as a wife. It was as happy as it should have been, with but one shadow on it, — I hope not a very dark one, — the refusal of her father to be reconciled with her.

Mrs. Browning, the celebrated poet at Florence, is less known to us than the secluded Miss Barrett reading Greek at Torquay. No English poet, from Milton down, was ever so deeply attached to Italy as she. Her heart burned for it with more than poetic emotion, — burned and flamed with the unquenchable fire of patriotism. What she felt the world knew, in 1851, when she published her "Casa Guidi Windows," as it

knew what she was, when it read her "Sonnets from the Portuguese," which are to me the most remarkable personal poems ever written. Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose critical talents are of the highest order, has something to say on this point in his "Victorian Poets," an admirable book, which not only proves that a poet can write prose, but that he can be just and generous to his fellow-singers. "Never was man or minstrel," he writes, "so honored as her 'most gracious singer of high poems.' In the tremor of her love she undervalued herself—with all her feebleness of body, it was enough for any man to live within the atmosphere of such a soul! In fine the Portuguese Sonnets, whose title was a screen behind which the singer poured out her full heart, are the most exquisite poetry hitherto written by a woman, and of themselves justify us in pronouncing their author the greatest of her sex,—on the ground that the highest mission of the female poet is the expression of love, and that no other woman approaching her in genius has

essayed the ultimate form of that expression."

The Brownings spent their summers in Florence, and their winters in Rome, and occasionally visited England. "This summer," says Miss Mitford, writing in 1851, "I have had the exquisite pleasure of seeing her once more in London, with a lovely boy at her knee, almost as well as ever, and telling me of Italian rambles, of losing herself in chestnut forests, and scrambling on mule-back up the scone of extinct volcanoes." Mr. Bayard Taylor, who was in London at this time, met the mated poets, as he has told us in "At Home and Abroad," a collection of pleasant sketches of life, scenery, and men. "Calling, one afternoon in September, at their residence in Devonshire Street," he writes, "I was fortunate enough to find both at home, though on the eve of their return to Florence. In a small drawing-room on the first floor I met Browning, who received me with great cordiality. In his lively, cheerful manner, quick voice, and perfect self-possession, he

would make the impression of an American rather than an Englishman. He was then, I should judge, about thirty-seven years of age, but his dark hair was already streaked with gray about the temples. His complexion was fair, with perhaps the faintest olive tinge, eyes large, clear, and gray, nose strong and well out, mouth full and rather broad, and chin pointed, though not prominent. His forehead broadened rapidly upwards from the outer angle of the eyes, slightly retreating. The strong individuality which marks his poetry was expressed, not only in his face and head, but in his whole demeanor. He was about the medium height, strong in the shoulders, but slender at the waist, and his movements expressed a combination of vigor and elasticity. Another gentleman was present," Mr. Taylor goes on to say, — a very large gentleman of between fifty and sixty, who weighed two hundred and fifty pounds at least, and whose rosy face, bald head, and rotund body suggested a prosperous brewer, had not a livelier intelligence than most brewers may be sup-

posed to possess twinkled in his bright genial eyes. This was Mr. John Kenyon, who, as I have said, was a relative of Mrs. Browning, and who devoted his time and fortune to making his friends happy. Entitled to a place among the poets of the period, on account of his "Rhymed Plea for Tolerance," published some eighteen years before, he has two claims to the world's remembrance, — one the legacy of ten thousand pounds which he left to Mrs. Browning, the other the charming Anacreontic "Lily on liquid roses floating." Such was Mr. Kenyon, who had called to bid the Brownings good-by, and whom Browning characterized after his departure as "Kenyon the Magnificent." "His eulogy was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Browning, whom he ran to meet with a boyish liveliness. She was slight and fragile in appearance, with a pale, wasted face, shaded by masses of soft chestnut curls which fell on her cheeks, and serious eyes of bluish-gray. Her frame seemed to be altogether disproportionate to her soul. This at least was the first impression:

her personality, frail as it appeared, soon exercised its power, and it seemed a natural thing that she should have written the 'Cry of the Children' or the 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship.' I also understood how these two poets, so different both intellectually and physically, should have found their complements in each other. The fortunate balance of their reciprocal qualities makes them an exception to the rule that the intermarriage of authors is unadvisable, and they appear to be—and are—perfectly happy in their wedded life." The Brownings expressed great satisfaction with their American reputation, and the conversation taking a turn that led to American Art Mrs. Browning expressed the belief that a Republican form of government was unfavorable to the Fine Arts. Mr. Taylor dissented to this opinion, and a general historical discussion ensued, which was carried on for some time with the greatest spirit, husband and wife taking directly opposite views. When the good humored discussion ended the third Browning mentioned by Miss Mitford ap-

peared. "Their child, a blue-eyed, golden-haired boy of two years old, was brought into the room. He stammered Italian sentences only; he knew nothing, as yet, of his native tongue. He has since exhibited a remarkable genius for music and drawing — a fortunate circumstance, for inherited genius is always fresher and more vigorous when it seeks a new form of expression."

Mr. Taylor pursued his journey to the East, and the Brownings returned to Florence, which they made their permanent home, though they visited England from time to time. In 1856 Mrs. Browning published her longest poem "Aurora Leigh," and in 1860 "Napoleon III. in Italy."

I have given a glimpse of the Brownings, as Mr. Taylor saw them: I will now give a glimpse of them as they saw themselves. It is in the shape of a joint letter which they wrote to Leigh Hunt, on the 6th of October, 1857, from Bagni di Lucca, and which was published in 1862, in his "Correspondence," edited by his eldest son. As this work has

not been republished here, I am sure that American readers will welcome this addition to their knowledge of the wedded life of the Brownings. Thus runs their joint letter to the old poet at Hammersmith: —

“DEAR LEIGH HUNT, — (it is hard to write, but you bade me do so; yet I had better say ‘Master Hunt,’ as they used to call Webster or Ford). A nine months’ silence after such a letter as yours seems too strange even to you perhaps. So understand that you gave us more delight at once than we could bear; that was the beginning of the waiting to recover spirit and do one’s feelings a little less injustice. But soon followed unexpected sorrows to us and to you, and the expression of even gratitude grew hard again. Certainly all this while your letter has been laid before our very eyes, and we have waited for a brighter day than ever came till we left Florence two months ago and more, then we brought it to ‘answer’ among the chestnut-trees; but immediately on our arrival a friend was attacked by

fever, and we were kept in anxiety about him for six weeks. At last he recovered sufficiently to leave for Florence, and (just think) our little boy became ill, for the first time in his life, and gave us solicitude enough for a fortnight; it is nothing now that it is over; he is going about now almost as well as before, and we go away to-morrow, as I said. But I will try and get one, at least, of the joys I came to find here, and really write to you from this place, as I meant to. 'I'—you know it is my wife that I write for, though you entangle either of us by the reverberations (so to speak) of pleasures over and above the pleasure you give us. I intend to say, that you praise that poem, and mix it up with praise of her very self, and then give it to me directly, and then give it back to *her* with the pride you have just given me, and then it somehow comes back to me increased so far, till the effect is just as you probably intended. I wish my wife may know you more: I wish you may see and know her more, but you can not live by her eleven years, as I have done—or, yes,

what can not you do, being the man, the poet you are?—This last word, I dare think, I have a right to say; I *have* always venerated you as a poet; I believe your poetry to be sure of its eventual reward; other people, not unlikely, may feel like me, that there has been no need of getting into feverous haste to cry out on what is; yet you, who wrote it, can leave it and look at other poetry, and speak so of it: how well of you!

“I am still too near ‘Aurora Leigh’ to be quite able to see it all; my wife used to write it, and lay it down to hear our child spell, or when a visitor came,—it was thrust under a cushion then. At Paris, a year ago last March, she gave me the first six books to read, I never having seen a line before. She then wrote the rest, and transcribed them in London, where I read them also. I wish, in one sense, that I had written and she had read it. I shall commend myself to you by telling you this. Indeed the proper acknowledgment of your letter seems to be that one should do something, not say something. If

you were here, I might quite naturally begin repeating 'Giaffar' or 'Solomon,' and the rest. You would see if I was not capable of getting all the good out of your praise.

"While I write, there is a strange thing that happened last night, impossible to get out of my thoughts. It may give you pain to tell you of it, yet if with the pain come triumphant memories and hopes, as I expect there will, you may choose the pain with them. What decides me to tell it is that I heard you years ago allude to the destruction of a volume of 'Lamia, Isabella,' &c., *to be restored to you yet*,—now you remember; also, I think, of your putting my name near Shelley's in the end of your letter, where you say, 'Since I lost Shelley.' Is it not strange that I should have transcribed for the first time, last night, the 'Indian Serenade,' that, together with some verses of Metastasio, accompanied the book? That I should have been reserved to tell the present possessor of them, to whom they were presented by Capt. Roberts, — *what the poem was, and that it*

had been published! It is preserved religiously; but the characters are all but illegible, and I needed a good magnifying glass to be quite sure of such of them as remain. The end is that I have rescued three or four variations in the reading of that divine little poem, as one reads it, at least, in the 'Posthumous Poems.' It is headed the 'Indian Serenade' (not 'Lines to an Indian Air'). In the first stanza, the seventh line is 'Hath led me;' in the second, the third line is, 'And the champak's odors fail;' and the eighth, 'O! Beloved as thou art!' In the last stanza, the seventh line was, 'Oh, press it to thine own again.' Are not all these better readings? (even to the 'Hath' for 'Has'.) There, I give them you as you gave us Milton's hair. If I have mistaken in telling you, you will understand and forgive.

"I think I will ask my wife to say a word or two so that I shall be sure you will forgive. Now let my wife say the remainder. All I have wished to do — know how little likely it was that I should succeed in that — was to

assure you of my pride and affectionate gratitude. — God bless you ever,

“R. B.”

“Dear friend, I will say; for I feel it must be something as good as friendship that can forgive and understand this silence, so much like the veriest human kind of ingratitude. When I look back and think — all this time after that letter, and not a sign made — I wonder. Yet if you knew! First of all, we were silent because we waited for information which you seemed to desire. Then there were sadder reasons. Poor ‘Aurora,’ that you were so more than kind to (oh, how can I think of it?) has been steeped in tears, and some of them of a very bitter sort. Your letter was addressed to my husband, you knowing by your delicate true instinct where your praise would give most pleasure; but I believe Robert had not the heart to write when I felt I should not have the spirits to add a word in the proper key. We came here from Florence a few months ago to get

repose and cheerfulness from the sight of the mountains; we said to ourselves that we would speak to you at ease — instead of which the word was taken from our own mouth, and we have done little but sit by sick-beds and meditate on gastric fevers. So disturbed we have been — so sad! Our little precious child the last victim. To see him lying still on his golden curls, with cheeks too scarlet to suit the poor patient eyes, looking so frightfully like an angel! It was very hard. But this is over, I do thank God, and we are on the point of carrying back our treasure with us to Florence to-morrow, quite recovered, if a little thinner and weaker, and the young voice as merry as ever. You are aware that that child I am more proud of than twenty ‘Auroras,’ even after Leigh Hunt has praised them. He is eight years old, and has never been ‘crammed,’ but reads English, Italian, French, German, and plays the piano — then is the sweetest child! sweeter than he looks. When he was ill, he said to me, ‘You pet! don’t be unhappy about me.

Think it's a boy in the street, and be a little sorry, but not unhappy.' Who could not be unhappy I wonder?

"I never saw your book called the 'Religion of the Heart.' It's the only book of yours I never saw, and I mean to wipe out that reproach on the soonest day possible. I receive more dogmas, perhaps, (my 'perhaps' being in the dark rather) than you do. I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ in the intensest sense — that he was God absolutely. But for the rest, I am very unorthodox about the spirit, the flesh, and the devil, and if you would not let me sit by you, a great many churchmen wouldn't; in fact, churches all of them, as at present constituted, seem too narrow and low to hold true Christianity in its proximate developments. I, at least, can not help believing them so.

"My dear friend, can we dare after our sins against you, — can we dare *wish* for a letter from you sometimes? Ask, we dare not. God bless you. Even if you had not praised me and made me so grateful, I should be

grateful to you for three things—for your poetry (that first), then for Milton's hair, and then for the memory I have of our visit to you, when you sat in that chair and spoke so mildly and deeply at once.

“Let me be ever affectionately yours,

“ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.”

Thus concerning each other, this poet-wife and poet-husband, the latter of whom published his “Men and Women” in the same year as “Aurora Leigh.” He gave a poetic summary of his intentions and his work in the last poem in that selection of dramatic studies, and closed with the following address to his Love:—

“This I say of me, but think of you, Love;

This to you — yourself my moon of poets!

Ah, but that's the world's side — there's the wonder —

Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you

There, in turn I stand with them and praise you,

Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.

But the best is when I glide from out them,

Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song — and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel — borne, see, on my bosom!"

The fiery spirit of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, which so o'erinformed its tenement of clay, found rest at Casa Guidi, on June 29, 1861. Half an hour after daybreak she had

"Another morn than ours."

Leigh Hunt called her the "Sister of Tennyson," and another writer, more daringly, the "Daughter of Shakspeare." I think she was worthy of that high parentage.

R. H. S.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
 I. EARLY LETTERS, 1839-1843.	
Celebrated Letter Writers — Miss Mitford — Miss Barrett — Tragic Influence — The Syncretics — The "Monthly Chronicle" — The Theatrical Monopolies — "Orion" — Three Mile Cross — Harriet Martineau — Tennyson — Robert Montgomery	1
 II. "CHAUCER MODERNIZED," 1840.	
By Elizabeth Barrett Browning — William Wordsworth — Leigh Hunt — R. H. Horne — Dr. Leonhard Schmitz — and Others	76
 III. "A NEW SPIRIT OF THE AGE," 1843-1845.	
Contributors' Names now First Given — Miss Barrett — Landor — Robert Browning — Robert Bell — W. J. Fox, M.P. — Miss Barrett's Autobiographical Notes — H. F. Chorley — Leigh Hunt — Mr. Reade — Charles Dickens — Victor Hugo — Brookden Brown — Lever's Novels, etc.	100

IV. LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS.

"The Dead Pan" — Miss Barrett's Innovations in Rhyme — Her Double-Rhymes — Miss Mitford's Conservative Views respecting the Art of Poetry — The Spanish *rima asonante* — How to reconcile License in Rhyme — Versification — Chaucer's Rhythmical Variations — Miss Barrett's — The Laureate's — Douglas Jerrold — "An Omnivorous Cousin" — Albany Fonblanque — Original Sketch of "A Drama of Exile" — Sarah Stickney (Mrs. Ellis) — Harriet Martineau — Gossip — Sara Coleridge — Miss Barrett's Opinion of "The London Doll" — Mrs. Jameson — Leigh Hunt and Ben Jonson — Wordsworth and the Lake Railroad — Carlyle and Mesmerism — Edgar Allan Poe — Miss Barrett contemplates leaving England — "Ballad Romances" — Robert Browning at Pisa — The "Daily News" in Ireland during the Famine — Miss Barrett's Marriage — In the Footsteps of Byron, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt — Florence — Ravenna — At Dante's Tomb — Mr. and Mrs. Browning's Return to England — Departure for Paris 230

L

EARLY LETTERS.

Letter-writing a Lost Art — Celebrated Letter-writers — Miss Mitford — Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett — First Introduce Miss Barrett to the Public — The "Death-Fetches" — Death of Miss Barrett's Brother — "Gregory VII." — Tragic Influence — "Orion" Seedlings — Hooping-Cough — Miss Sedgwick's Book on America — The Syncretics — The "Monthly Chronicle" and its Fate — "The Seraphim" and other Poems — The Theatrical Patent Monopolies — Petition against them — Miss Barrett's Refusal to Sign — Portrait of Keats — "Orion" — Miss Katherine Cockell — Beauty in Women — Shyness — Recollections of Mary Russell Mitford — "Blackwood" — My Visit to Three Mile Cross — Harriet Martineau — American Reviews of Tennyson — Robert Montgomery.

A LADY with whom I have the honor to be acquainted — the author of some recently published volumes of true poetry — is in the habit of excusing herself to her correspond-

ents for the brevity of her notes, on the ground that 'letter-writing' is one of the lost arts. The present generation seems to have become "too fast" for it. Recalling to memory the celebrated letter-writers of a more leisurely literary period, — Madame de Sévigné, Madame de Staël, and Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu; and among men, the more highly-finished and future-eyed letter-writers, such as Pope, Addison, Cowper, Horace Walpole, and others, one begins to see that there is much truth in the assertion. That the "loss" of the art is mainly attributable to an impatient sense of the loss of time will scarcely be denied, if we bring our view down to the nearer dates of the admirable letters of Robert Burns, of Southey, of Mary Russell Mitford, Leigh Hunt, Charles Dickens, Harriet Martineau, Sara Coleridge, and those of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a portion of which are now first given to the world.

Putting mere fine talk out of court, and presupposing some brains, study, and experi-

ence, the art of letter-writing is just the art, so to speak, of being natural. In other words, it is not an *art* at all. Inasmuch as nobody comes to *read* with facility till a good deal of reading has been done; so in writing with facility, a considerable amount of previous writing is to be understood; and once taking this for granted, letter-writing, varying in character and excellence with the individual writer, is, in its highest forms of success, the natural and spontaneous outpouring of a well-stored intellect, a genial spirit, the wit and humor that comes unsought, and the *abandon* of soul and heart which arises from the full belief of addressing a congenial mind. Letters of this kind are the perfection of refined colloquiality. Those of Miss Mitford carried the carelessness of implicit confidence to an amusing extent, innumerable letters and notes from her having been written on any scraps of paper at hand, old envelopes turned inside out, and blank edges of newspapers, the outsides of many letters being frequently half covered with postscripts and

after-thoughts. Those of Mrs. Browning had no external signs of this easy, off-hand carelessness, but *within* they were the perfection of confiding frankness, and the complete undisguised expression of the writer's thought and feeling upon every subject she touched.

It will be remembered that Miss Barrett, having been for years confined to her rooms, like an exotic plant in a greenhouse, being considered in constant danger of rapid decline, occupied herself in the arduous study of poetry, and in acquiring a knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. She was well acquainted with all the greatest authors of France and Italy, in the original, and she was a most assiduous reader of English literature, conversant equally with the earliest authors and the best of her own day. Her criticisms in the "Athenæum" are among the finest ever penned, discriminating and applauding all the power and beauty, lenient to errors and shortcomings, and rich with imaginative illustrations. That the same merits, united to a subtle instinct as to char-

acter, the more remarkable considering her years of seclusion, characterize her private letters, has hitherto only been known to the few who enjoyed her society, or ranked among her correspondents.

My first introduction to Miss Barrett was by a note from Mrs. Orme, inclosing one from the young lady, containing a short poem, with the modest request to be frankly told whether it might be ranked as poetry or merely verse. As there could be no doubt in the recipient's mind on that point, the poem was forwarded to "Colburn's New Monthly," edited at that time by Mr. Bulwer (afterwards the late Lord Lytton), where it duly appeared in the current number. The next manuscript sent to me was "The Dead Pan," and the poetess at once started on her bright and noble career.

It was thus my happiness to be instrumental in first introducing Miss E. B. Barrett to the literary world. In addition to this fact (to me a source of just pride), it must be remembered that I was many years her senior,

that I had published several works, and had many literary engagements (with the whole of which she was fully acquainted), and that she knew of my varied experiences in foreign lands; a combination which, acting upon her imagination in solitude, together with a most unexampled over-estimate of my services, evoked expressions of gratitude and deference, and which, with profound respect to her memory, I beg to disclaim. For the frequent reference, also, to my Tragedies and other works, let me ask the reader to grant me his pardon — the more necessary, if, as will be likely with so many readers of the present day, he has never read a line of them; and it may strengthen my excuse for the inability to omit such passages, if I remind him that the books in question have been, for the most part, long out of print. Matters very clear in the letters as they stand would become misty and confused if I erased those passages.

The first of Miss Barrett's letters that I have been able to find refers to a contribution of mine, written at her request, to one of

"Finden's Illustrated Annals," edited by her friend Miss Mitford. I did not at all like these ornamental efflorescences of passing literature, as both ladies knew; the thing was done, nevertheless, being cast in the shape of a trilogy, founded on the German legend of the "Death-Fetches." I have never seen it since, nor has anybody else in all probability, for it shared the deserved fate of these annual gildings.

I.

"BEACON TERRACE, TORQUAY,

"Nov. 20th, 1839.

"MY DEAR SIR, — In passing to the immediate occasion of my troubling you with these lines, allow me to thank you — to join mine to the thanks of many — for the pleasure of admiration (surely not the least of the pleasures of this world) with which I have read your trilogy. It is so full of fine conception, that its brevity grows into a fault, — one would so willingly see it brought out into detail and consummation. But, even as it is, believe in my contentment — speaking for myself.

“The moonlight scene is exquisite, and there is (particularly distinguishable in that) a music of *broken cadences* which I have seldom observed out of Shakespeare. It is the Fetch of a great tragedy—for all the briefness.

“I should not have ventured to trouble you with opinions you might so easily take for granted, if it were not for another circumstance. Two months or more ago, you will remember asking me to send you a short poem by return of post, for a particular purpose. I was ill able to write at the time, but still worse able to endure the appearance of discourtesy towards you in such a trifle, and therefore I sent you two MSS. which I had by me, the shortest I had, but evidently too long to suit you. I did it just and only that you might not think me ill-natured; and the event having proved that uselessness to you otherwise, perhaps you would be kind enough to inclose them back to me—that is, if you can readily put your hand upon them. The ‘Madrigal of Flowers’ is one title, and the ‘Cry of the Human’ the other. I am afraid

of involving you in some trouble of search for which you may well reproach me. So pray, if you cannot readily put your hand upon them, put the subject out of your head.

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.

“ To R. H. Horne,

“ 75, Gloucester Place, London.”

The next letter alludes to a sad event—the drowning of Miss Barrett’s brother, while on a boating excursion, almost before her eyes:—

II. [Postmark — TORQUAY, May 17th, 1840.]

“ I shall be more at ease when I have thanked you, dear Mr. Horne, for your assurance of sympathy, which in its feeling and considerate expression, a few days since, touched me so nearly and deeply. Without it I should have written when I was able—I mean physically able—for, in the exhaustion consequent upon fever, I have been too weak to hold a pen. As to reluctance of feeling, believe me that I must change more than

illness or grief can change me, before it becomes a painful effort to communicate with one so very kind as you have been to me. Kindness and sympathy are not such common things. And as to the strangership—why, a friend is proved by remaining one in adversity. You *began* to be one in mine; and *for that reason*—a peculiarity which in separating you from the class of ordinary friends removes you still further from that of strangers—it is easier for you to forget this, than for me.

“ Besides the appreciated sympathy, I have to acknowledge four proofs of your remembrance, the seals of which lay unbroken for a fortnight or more after their removal here. In one letter was something about ‘neglect’—you told me never to fancy a silence into a neglect. Was I likely to do it? Was there any room for even fancy to try? That would be still more surprising than the fact of your making room for a thought of me in the multitude of your occupations.

“ You have been in the fields—I know by

the flowers — and found there, I suppose, between the flowers and the life and dear Mrs. Orme, that pleasant dream (for me!) about my going to London at Easter. I never dreamt it. And while you wrote, what a mournful contrary was going on here! It was a heavy blow (may God keep you from such! I knew you would be sorry for me when you heard). It was a heavy blow for all of us — and I, being weak, you see, was struck down as by a *bodily* blow, in a moment, without having time for tears. I did not think, indeed, to be better any more, but I have quite rallied now — except as to strength — and they say that on essential points I shall not suffer permanently — and this is a comfort to poor papa.

“But oh, Mr. Horne, God’s will is so high above humanity, that its goodness and perfectness cannot be scanned at a glance, and would be very terrible if it were not for His manifested love — manifested in Jesus Christ. Only *that* holds our hearts together when He shatters the world.”

"Saturday.

"I had finished 'Napoleon,' and was about to write to you on the subject, and I will still write. Now — 'Gregory!'

" 'His large hands sway the air about my head.'

"I have read but little lately, and not at all until very lately; but two or three days ago papa held up 'Gregory' before my eyes as something sure to bring pleasure into them. 'Ah! I knew that would move you.' After all, I have scarcely been long enough face to face with him to apprehend the full grandeur of his countenance. There are very grand things, and expounded in your characteristic massiveness of diction. But it does so far appear to me that for the tragic heights, and for that passionate singleness of purpose in which you surpass the poets of our time, we shall revert to 'Cosmo' and to 'Marlowe.' Well — it may be very wrong — I must think over my thoughts. And at any rate the 'Essay on Tragic Influence' is full of noble philosophy and poetry. Only you do more honor to

the stage and the actorship than I could do Tragedy is a high form of poetry — perhaps the highest — and absolutely independent, in its own essence, of stages ; which involve, to my mind, little more than its translation into a grosser form, in order to its apprehension by the vulgar. What Macready can touch ‘Lear’ ? In brief, if the union between tragedy and the gaslights be less incongruous and absurd than the union between Church and State, is it less desecrative of the Divine theory ? In the clashing of my *No* against your *Yes*, I must write good-by.

“Do believe me, under all circumstances, truly and gratefully yours,

“E. B. BARRETT.

“Will you tell me when there is any criticism upon ‘Gregory’ made by οἱ ὀντροί, in case I should miss any ? I am anxious for the laurels. And you will not be angry that I revert to ‘Cosmo’ ? ‘Cosmo’ is ‘Cosmo ;’ the precedence, were it granted, is only you of you.”

III. [Undated, but apparently very soon after the letter from Torquay of May 17th, 1840.]

“It requires some moral courage, dear Mr. Horne, to send you such a present as this cream. But it is of Britannia’s Pastorals, and the only fit tribute from Devonshire — and people like it sometimes in their coffee or tea, or with their fruit. Therefore I pre-
forgive your laughing at me.

“‘Gregory’ enlarges while you gaze. Indeed it is a grand production, and one upon which I congratulate both you and our literature.

“The whole of the fourth and fifth acts lies in masses before my admiration, with short interventions. How sublime is the prayer — that one epithet, ‘the insufficient sea’ — and how much besides, which I can’t write of this morning, is not to be forgotten while day follows day. Your Elizabethan fashion of malleting down your metaphors into the groundwork produces a diction of extraordinary power — it is concentrated language. Most truly yours,

“ELIZABETH B. BARRETT

“Torquay, Thursday morning.”

IV. [Date faded, but looks like June 30th, 1840.]

“ You will think there is no end of me, and I am thinking of engaging a secretary to copy out the extracts from Miss Mitford’s letters to me, which are addressed to you. Here I send you a page which belongs to you, and is all about your apotheosis in the shape of a geranium at the next Chiswick *fête*. This relates to Mr. Foster’s geranium. I had another letter two days ago about a seedling of her own, which is also called after you, and of which both you and I, if we and the sun behave pretty well, are promised a descendant plant next year. And now, dear Mr. Horne, I will let you go in peace.

“ Tell me, whenever next you write, both how you are and how the shilling ‘Orion’ is going off, for I confess to a curiosity.

“ Yours,

“ E. B. B.

“ Mr. Haydon has lost the ‘Cartoon prize.’
I am so sorry.

“ I have explained to Miss Mitford your impossibilities and your probabilities — for the early part of July, I mean.”

The new geranium of the Chiswick *fête*, and Miss Mitford's “ seedling,” which were to be called “ Orion,” together with the reference to other matters made in the foregoing note, arose in consequence of the friendly interest taken in that gratuitous experiment of the first edition of “ Orion ” by both these ladies.

The next letter refers to the unusual circumstance of a “ hooping-cough ” being caught a second time. Having been engaged as one of the Assistant Commissioners in the Government inquiry into the “ Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mines and Manufactories,” I chanced one day to be seated for a couple of hours, during an east wind of the winter months, taking the evidence of some children, in a newly plastered church ante-room, with the accompaniment of a thorough draught from doors and windows :

and a first-rate cough, with all the “hooping” convulsions, like “laughter holding both his sides” (with a difference), was the consequence. But a much more important subject, viz., the struggles of an heroic spirit in a most fragile frame, will be discovered in the following interesting and touching letter: —

V. [Post-mark — TORQUAY, June 12th, 1841.]

“MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I am so sorry about the hooping-cough. As a means of ‘rejuvenescence,’ why, one might as pleasantly pass into and through Medea’s kettle. Do try to remember when you write again, and tell me how you are; if the change of air perfects the good it has begun. For my own part, I never had the hooping-cough at all. I stood alone in my family, and wouldn’t have it when everybody else was hooping.

“I am revived just now — pleased, anxious, excited altogether, in the hope of touching at last upon my last days at this

place. I have been up, and bore it excellently—up an hour at a time without fainting—and on several days without injury—and now am looking forward to the journey. My physician has been open with me, and is of opinion that there is a good deal of risk to be run in attempting it. But my mind is made up to go; and if the power remains to me, I *will* go. To be at home, and relieved from the sense of doing evil where I would soonest bring a blessing—of breaking up poor papa's domestic peace into fragments by keeping my sisters here (and he won't let them leave me)—would urge me into any possible 'risk'—to say nothing of the continual repulsion, night and day, of the sights and sounds of this dreary place. There will be no opposition. So papa promised me at the beginning of last winter that I should go when it became 'possible.' Then Dr. Scully did not talk of 'risk,' but of certain consequences. He said I should die on the road. I know how to understand the change of phrase. There is only a 'risk'

now — and the journey is ‘possible.’ So I go.

“We are to have one of the patent carriages, with a thousand springs, from London, and I am afraid of nothing. I shall set out, I *hope*, in a fortnight.

“Ah, but not directly for London. There is to be some intermediate place where we all must meet, papa says, and stay for a month or two before the final settlement in Wimpole Street, — and he names ‘Clifton,’ and I pray for the neighborhood of London, because I look far (too far, perhaps, for me) and fear being left an exile again at those Hot Wells during the winter. I don’t know what the ‘finality measure’ may be. The only thing fixed is a journey from hence: — and ‘if I fall,’ as the heroes say, why you and ‘Psyche’ must walk by yourselves. *She*, at least, won’t be the worse for it.

“Who taught this parrot its ‘How d’ye do?’ and so much irrelevancy? You would be tired of me, even if you hadn’t the hooping-cough.

"Is it true that Mr. Heraud's magazine is downfallen? And why?¹

"But don't answer my questions — don't indeed write at all until you are better, and able and inclined to write. Writing is so bad — learning to write is so bad, and I don't suppose that you could write in the way that I do, leaning backwards instead of forwards — lying down, in fact. I write so 'to the Horse Guards.'

"How you would smile sarcasms and epigrams out of the 'hood' if you could see

¹ John Abraham Heraud, a voluminous but little-read poet and dramatic author. Born in 1799, he commenced writing for the English magazines in 1818. His principal works are "Tottenham," a poem, 1820; "Legend of St. Loy," 1821; "The Descent into Hell," 1830; "The Judgment of the Flood," 1834; "Videna, a Tragedy," 1854; "Wife or No Wife;" "Agnolo Dora;" "The Roman Brother," and "Salvator, or the Poor Man of Naples," two tragedies; "The Life and Times of Girolamo Savonarola;" and some orations, and lectures on Coleridge and poetry. He was at one time the editor of "The Monthly Magazine," and of the "Christian Monthly Magazine," and was a frequent contributor to the periodical press. Mr. Heraud will be remembered, if remembered, by a *bon-mot* of Douglas Jerrold, who, on his asking him if he had read his "Descent into Hell," said, "No; but I should like to see it." — S.

from it what I have been doing, or rather suffering, lately! Having my picture taken by a lady miniature-painter who wandered here to put an old view of mine to proof. For it wasn't the ruling passion 'strong in death,' 'though by your smiling you may seem to say so,' but a sacrifice to papa.

"Are you tossed about much by the agitation of political matters, or indifferently calm? I hear nothing from London, except what Lord Melbourne has done, or the Queen said.

"Don't let me mar any thing in your conception with regard to the drama. Push any foolishness aside which seems to do it.

"I did *not* understand your particular view. I thought that our philosopher (Medon), having laboriously worked himself blind with the vain, earthward, cramped strivings of his intellect, was suddenly thrown upon the verge of awaking in, and to, the spiritual world, by a casualty relating to his body itself. It was something of that sort which I seemed to discern in what you wrote.

"Truly yours,

"ELIZABETH B. BARRETT."

Miss Barrett's friendly indignation will amuse some readers, remembering its cause. I suppose the following is the only "attack upon the Government" to be found in all her writings:—

VI.

"July 24th.

"There was a blank, dear Mr. Horne, in your last notes when you ought to have said something about the cough. I hope the silence meant that you had quite forgotten all the cutting-up and boiling—the whole process of your 'rejuvenescence'—and that your present suffering is concentrated in the parliamentary reports.

"It is an atrocious system altogether—the system established in this England of ours—wherein no river finds its own level, but is forced into leaden pipes, up or down; her fools lifted into chairs of state, her wise men waiting behind them, and her poets made Cinderellas of, and promoted into accurate counters of pots and pans. We need not wonder at the selections. *Every thing* 'is rotten in the state of Denmark.'

“Have you seen Miss Sedgwick’s book, and heard the great tempest it has stirred up around you in London, without a Franklin to direct the lightning? She was received from America two or three years since, by certain societies, with open arms, — none ever suspecting her to be the chiel ‘amang them, takin’ notes!’ The revelation was dreadful. My friend and cousin, Mr. Kenyon — admitted to be one of the most brilliant conversers in London — fell upon the proof-sheets accidentally, just half an hour previous to their publication” (*printing* must be meant), “and finding them sown thick with personalities, side by side with praises of his own agreeable wit, took courage and a pen, and ‘cleansed the premises!’ Afterwards he wrote across the Atlantic to explain ‘the moral right’ he had to his deed. For my own part, strongly as I feel the saliency of Miss Sedgwick’s fault (it struck repeatedly and ungratefully upon some who had bestowed cordial and sisterly attention upon her, and ‘less as an authoress than as a

friend'), I am not quite clear about Mr Kenyon's 'right.' The act was *un peu fort* in its heroism, and probably his American admirers may not thank him as warmly as her victims do.

"Not that I ever do, or could, join in the outcry against Boswell and his generation; I like them too well. But there is a line—a limit—to their communicativeness; and such as pass it dirty their feet.

"Yours,

"E. B. B."

Certainly the feeling of Miss Barrett as to her cousin's act is the proper one. Any book or article might be completely thrown "off its balance" by such a proceeding. What writer could feel safe if wholesale and unauthorized erasures could thus be made in his books? And what should we think of any printing-office where it would be permitted?

VII. [Postmark — TORQUAY, Aug. 4th, 1841.]

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I am so sorry

to hear of the obstinacy of this cough of yours. Why do you not get away from London, and keep moving about? Continual change of air, says Dr. Scully — my physician, who says every thing of that sort wisely — is the *specific* for hooping-cough in its advanced stage — that is, when it lingers as yours does. Surely you should not allow the winter months to surprise you coughing. And surely (pardon my impertinence) it wouldn't be much harder to go round London in a circle, if it were only from village to village, previous to the settling down in chambers, than to settle immediately.

“For my own part, I am gasping still for permission to move too; but papa has gone suddenly into Herefordshire, and I am almost sure not to hear for a week. Something, however, must soon be determined; and in the mean time, being tied hand and foot, and gagged, I am wonderfully patient.

“Did you hear of Mrs. Orme's proposal about coming here? It was very kind, and I felt it so, even as an impossibility.

"If you have no 'vow in heaven' *never* to answer a question, will you tell me whether the 'Monthly Chronicle' is extinct, and why?

"Truly yours,

"E. B. B."

VIII.

"TORQUAY, Aug. 14th, 1841.

"I would not hear your enemy say so, dear Mr. Horne, that you were a bad correspondent, much less say so myself. You are a bad *catechumen*, and that's the worst of you, and I'm sure it doesn't deserve a bad cough. Therefore, if you receive a jar of tamarinds from the West Indies *viâ* Wimpole Street — and you will, in the case of papa's having received any himself, as he usually does — pray use them. But the pilgrimage through the villages is the remedy. And never mind 'Psyche.' There is plenty of time for 'Psyche' in the future, if not now. She is persecuting you, I fear. Remember, when one is tied with cords, to struggle only strengthens the knots. Put 'Psyche' away out of thought for the present, and don't

fancy that I (for one) am even inclined to be impatient about it. I shall not expect any more news of her for six months, from this fourteenth of August, eighteen hundred and forty-one.

“And so your angelic sin is so rampant that ‘you’d be an abbot’ (and not a ‘butterfly,’ despite of ‘Psyche’) if you went into a monastery — an abbot of misrule — unless St. Cecilia, who ‘drew the angel down,’ did the like by your reverend desires. Ah! when I was ten years old, I beat you all — you and Napoleon and all — in ambition; but now I only want to get home.

“Nevertheless, I fear I do fear the light words may be bubbles at the top — that it may be darker underneath. I know the secret of that, you see; and I fear that the hooping-cough and the pressure of business don’t go blithely together, and that you are walking your imaginary cloisters with a graver, perhaps sadder, step than should be. Can it be so? Is it so? The louder the call then to the villages. Neither cloisters nor

graves are ready for you yet, nor you for them. So I do hope that 'generally you don't think' about either. Whom should we have for Dramatic Professor in the great genius establishment [a hit at the Syncretics], where the moth will be sworn never to corrupt, and the thief never to steal? Whom, if you were away? If you were only an abbot, or an organist, it would be very different.

"So, the 'Monthly Chronicle' is gone — self-slain, because it wouldn't condescend to be lively. There was power enough in it for three or four magazine popularities — but the taste of *caviare* preponderated, and people turned away their heads. They said of it, as my own ears witnessed, 'dull and heavy.' Then it was such a fatal mistake to keep back the names! I saw it to the last. God bless you! I am going to think in the face of *the weather*, if it won't turn round.

"Truly yours,

"E. B. B."

The last words convey a more satirical meaning than is apparent.

The brief literary career of the "Monthly Chronicle" is unique, curious, and amusing in a certain way. It was started under the joint auspices of three popular celebrities of the time, Sir David Brewster, Sir E. L. Bulwer, and Dr. Lardner. Being all three proprietors and editors, and each too great to communicate his intentions to either of the others (or even give a definite reply to the contributor, as I found), a beautiful confusion was the constant and necessary result. The magazine, however, was successfully advancing by reason of the prestige of the three names, when the following disastrously natural event occurred. One wonderful accident of "Murphy's Almanac" had just burst through the wintry fogs of London, the astrologer having truly predicted the very coldest of all the days of that winter; and the sale of the Almanac was of a kind that compelled the publishers (Messrs. Whittaker) to have police to keep off purchasers from crushing in the door and win

dows. The next number of the "Monthly Chronicle," therefore, came out with a very long article by Sir David Brewster, "On Murphy's Almanac," and another article by Dr. Lardner (no exchange of ideas having been deigned), consisting of fourteen pages, "On the Weather," being founded upon the same "Vox Stellarum." They occupied a third part of the whole magazine! After this, the publishers engaged Mr. Robert Bell, who did all that a gallant and indefatigable editor of six feet four could do, but the poor magazine never recovered from that double dose of cold weather.

Miss Barrett's first publication was "An Essay on Mind" (1826); her next was a translation of the "Prometheus" of Æschylus (1833); and her third, "The Seraphim and other Poems," in 1838. A certain critical work in which I was responsibly concerned, while fully admitting her genius, dealt freely with what seemed to be her shortcomings, a *résumé* of which seems to have been condensed in a private note. The following letter will show with how generous a spirit she bore all this: —

IX.

"50, WIMPOLE STREET,

"Nov. 4th, 1841.

"My head has ached so for two days (not my temper, I assure you), that I thought it was beheading itself; and now, that 'distracted globe' having come to a calm, I hasten to answer your letter. A bomb of a letter it is, to be sure! enough to give a dozen poets a headache apiece. 'No sex — no character — no physiognomy — no age — no Anno Domini!' — a very volcano of a letter.

"After all, dear Mr. Horne, your idea of revenge is not tragic enough for a great dramatist, and I may criticise back to you on such grounds. But then, again, I spare you on others. You needn't 'try to recant.' I am not angry — don't even feel ill-used (that feeling of melancholy complacency); and beg you to extend your dramatic scepter within reach of my subject hands, and with the 'diagram' at the top of it.¹

¹ [Referring, probably, to certain geometric figures I had suggested as private "working" illustrations for the "Psyche."]

“When Socrates said that it was worse to suffer, being guilty, than being innocent, wasn’t he right, — and am I not like Socrates? — in the sentiment, which I am right in — not position, which I am wrong in? At the same time, it does seem hard — hard even for Socrates — to drink all this hemlock without a speech — to die, and make no sign. The general criticism is too true a one, also lately true, but not equally, altogether true, perhaps, in every thing. I think, for instance, that my Page-romaunt has some sex and physiognomy, however the Anno Domini may be mislaid, even in her case. Well — but it’s a true general criticism — and true particularly, besides — and do send the diagram, dear Mr. Horne — and be sure that however lightly I have spoken, I must always be gravely grateful to you for telling me all such truths.

“Miss Mitford came to town last Thursday, in her abundant affectionateness, just to see me, and returned home on Saturday. She measures your dramatic stature by cubits. She prefers your ‘Cosmo’ to ‘Gregory.’ So

do I, you know — although the artistic power is greater in the ‘Gregory’ — and oh! — she told me that late struggle of the unacted authors [the Syncretics] has done good already in the theaters. ‘How?’ I asked. ‘Because it disproves the late idea of there being an immense deposit somewhere of excellent unacted dramatic works. People say to one another, “You see, they could find nothing more excellent than ‘Martinuzzi;’ and thus the theaters open their doors a little wider to the *rare* virtue!”’

“But you *could* have found something more excellent than ‘Martinuzzi.’ There was the —; well, but do send the diagram. I wish I could ‘transfuse’ in my brother George, who talks of meeting you face to face this evening at Mrs. Orme’s.

“Truly yours,

“ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.

“Of course I couldn’t object to listen to your arguments upon [against] the title-page [of her forthcoming volume], as long as they

do not touch my 'foregone conclusions.' But those — pray, dear Mr. Horne, remember — are fixed as Danton's hat."

The next three letters refer principally to the "legitimate drama" and the patent monopoly once possessed by three special London theaters. This is not the place to say much upon the subject. I consider it right that all such monopoly should be destroyed, and (as I put it in the petitions to both Houses) "that every theater should be permitted to enact the best dramas it could obtain." From the ashes of that monopoly I and those who worked with me at the destruction expected to see a new race both of dramatists and actors arise. Never were sanguine hopes more utterly defeated, and far worse idols were set up in the temples than those which had been cast down. Here was a young lady, living in utter seclusion, and hovering on the brink of the grave, who had far wiser instincts and far keener foresight than the man to whom she was writing with so much deference. She was re-

requested to place her name, among other signatures of eminent persons, to the petition in question.¹ How must we admire all she said, when we look around at the great majority of the stages of London, knowing what they have spread all over the world ever since we destroyed those patent monopolies! — that the “legitimate drama” has been smothered for the last twenty-five years by costly scenes, costly dresses, costly decorations, and licentious dancing; and by burlesques and claptraps which are an insult to the human understanding, and have proved

¹ My conversation with Bulwer, as to the presentation of our petition to the House of Commons, not having terminated with a definite consent, I had an interview with Mr. Disraeli on the subject, and he handsomely replied, that if Bulwer did not present the petition, he would do so, and request his friend, Lord Lyndhurst, to present the one to the Upper House.

[That Mr. Disraeli, amidst all his multitudinous avocations as a statesman and a novelist, had not forgotten this circumstance after the lapse of even a quarter of a century, is no less remarkable than true. A short time after Mr. Horne's return to England in 1860, he had occasion to write to Mr. Disraeli, who in reply very gracefully reminded Mr. Horne of their old acquaintanceship, alluding especially to their interview respecting the petition against the theatrical patent monopolies. — R. T. M.]

the ruin of so many deluded managements. The public never craved for such stuff; it was forced upon them, till they came to believe that the British stage was intended to hold the mirror up to Folly and Vulgarly, as the most attractive representations of Art and Nature.

X. "TORQUAY [not dated, but the postmark looks like 1841].

"Nothing of the 'tragic subject' to-day, dear Mr. Horne: I am going to get into a scrape instead.

"I tremble to do it, take a long breath before I begin, and then beg you to excuse me about the signature, and forgive me, if possible, afterwards.

"Have I done it? Is it all over with me? Oh! I feel the shadow of the great Gregory's hand, to match the foot, even at this distance.¹

"As to the petition, the justice of the claim lies upon the surface, and its policy not

¹ Alluding to what is said, in my tragedy, of the hand and foot of Hildebrand.

much deeper, and therefore in writing, and predicting all success, I need not stir from the common sense of the question. You are sure to gain the immediate object, and you ought to do so, even though the ultimate object remain as far off as ever, and more evidently far. There is a deeper evil than licenses or the want of licenses — the base and blind public taste. Multiply your theaters, and license every one — do it to-day — and the day after to-morrow (you may have one night) there will come Mr. Bunn, and turn out you and Shakspeare with a great roar of lions. Well! we shall see.

“ You know far more than I do, and you seem to hope more. If the great mass in London were Athenians, I might hope too. But I do *not* like giving my name to any thing about the theaters. It is a name unimportant to everybody in the world except just myself, for whom the giving of it would be the sign of an opinion; and I should not like to give it in any one thing favorable to the theaters. At their best, take the ideal of

them, and the soul of the Drama is far above the stage; and according to present and perhaps all past regulations in this country, dramatic poetry has been desecrated into the dust of our treading, — yes, and too often forced to desecration, and drawn down morally in turn, by the stage. When the poet has his gods in the gallery, what must be the end of it? Why, that even Shakspeare should bow his starry head oftener than Homer nodded, and write down his pure genius into the dirt of the groundlings, for the sake of the savor of their ‘most sweet voices;’ and even so be outwritten in popularity for years and years by his half-brother noble geniuses, Beaumont and Fletcher, *because* they stooped still lower.

“Well, but if you strike your head ever so much over this, and call me ever so many names, don’t be really angry. People will have their fancies and perversities, — grant me mine. If the name you asked for were not ‘bosh,’ I should be still more sorry than I now am to say no to your asking. And

yet, even as it is, I didn't like writing—either yesterday or the day before—nor do I to-day.

“The ‘Monthly Chronicle’ has not reached me yet. I am eager for the added scene of ‘Cosmo.’

“And glad, dear Mr. Horne, that you could like any thing in the volume where there is more to forgive than like, for even the kindest.

“Ever truly yours,

“E. B. B.”

XI.

“TORQUAY [no date given].

“Thank you, dear Mr. Horne, for the ‘Statesman,’ which is returned by the present post. So, dramatists can't originate under the Guelphs—can't ‘call their souls their own’—and nothing *is* originated in your tragedies. Such nonsense shouldn't provoke us as it does—*but* it does.

“Now, there is that Mr. Darley who has written a ‘Dramatic Chronicle’ (‘Thomas à Becket’), to prove that, nature being ex-

hausted, there can be no more tragedies No; the 'Chronicle' was not written to prove it: the Preface was. But he might more safely have left it to the 'Chronicle' — Q. E. D. A clever, picturesque composition — powerful in a certain way, though not in the tragic. If Mr. Darley stood alone as a tragedian, his proposition would be irrefutable. Not that I disesteem him. He wrote a beautiful tuneful pastoral once — 'Sylvia, or, the May Queen' — but the missing thing is passion — pathos — if not a *besides*.

"How wonderful that such ideas should be taken up by people with one!"¹

¹ Part of this denunciation is attributable to a friendly championship; Mr. Darley, it was said, having attacked me in a critical journal. Justice is done to his pastoral poem, but only a stinted justice to some of his dramatic writing. In one of his Chronicles there is a fight described between the High Chancellor, "tower-heavy Turketul," and "Gorm," a Scandinavian sea-king, worthy of the most heroic bardic power. Turketul at last strikes Gorm a finishing blow with his mace, and merely makes this terribly grim comment upon the affair — "Fell — laughed — and died! he made a goodly end!"

The letter alludes in a complimentary way to the critical joust

"But as to *poetry*, they are all sitting (in mistake), just now, upon Caucasus for Parnassus — and wondering why they don't see the Muses! He hasn't a heart even for Beaumont and Fletcher; and, to his mind, the cause of the abundance of poetical genius in the old times was — the difficulty they had in writing. We spell too well for any thing! Here's a discovery!

"It comes to this. If poetry, under any form, be exhaustible, Nature is; and if Nature be — we are near a blasphemy — I, for one, could not believe in the immortality of the soul.

'Si l'ame est immortelle,
L'amour ne l'est-il pas?'

Extending *l'amour* into all love of the ideal, and attendant power of idealizing.

nal in which Mr. Darley was writing his dramatic heresies, though I got him to sign our petition, notwithstanding.

[The fullest account of Mr. Darley which I have seen is contained in Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life." He was an accomplished though crotchety critic, and a charming poet, as the lovers of that scarce little volume of his, "Sylvia," are aware. His lyrics are best described in the words of old Izaak Walton: "They were old-fashioned poetry, but oh! so good, I think much better than the strong lines that are in fashion in this critical age."—S.]

“But, ah! there may be another mistake! Do you fancy that directly you have opened the minor theaters, ‘Cosmos’ and ‘Gregories,’ unwritten by you, will pour through the doors? *I* don’t. I don’t believe in mute inglorious Miltons, and far less in mute inglorious Shakspeares. Van Amburgh’s new elephant will take turn with ‘Gregory the Seventh’ — you will see.

“Where do you go in July? for *me*, I can’t answer. I am longing to go to London, and hoping to the last. For the present — certainly the window has been opened twice — an inch — but I can’t be lifted even to the sofa without fainting. And my physician shakes his head or changes the conversation, which is worse, whenever London is mentioned. But I do grow stronger; and if it becomes possible, I shall go, **WILL** go! That sounds better, doesn’t it. Putting it off to another summer is like a ‘never.’

“I was so glad to have your note. I really thought you had gone to America, or were tired of me — worse still. I never thought of

‘neglect,’ that being such a wrong word — but, otherwise, I lie here fancying all sorts of things in heaven and earth.

“It is a shame to expect all this stuff to be read by any person with time filled up as yours must be. Never mind throwing aside what I write for your leisure. Never let me be in the way. Now, if you are tired, you are avenged, for I am too.

“Ever truly,

“E. B. B.”

XII. “TORQUAY [no date, but probably 1842].

“MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — Thank you for the reproof from Hazlitt — in paragraph ‘to suit’ — for the beauty is the gentleness of the rebuke. Yet you and he could both have written as finely and forcibly upon the opposite evil of compromise [as to the theatrical patents], of temporizing as to objects, and being indifferent to means — that ‘fat weed’ of the day — perhaps of the world on all days. More of us, you will admit, do harm by groping along the pavement with blind

hands for the beggar's brass coin, than do folly by clutching at the stars 'from the misty mountain-top.' And if the would-be star-catchers catch nothing, they keep at least clean fingers.

"This applies to nothing, you will understand, except to the passage from Hazlitt—suggestively.

"And talking of beggar's coins, will you believe me (you *must* believe me) that I never thought until I had finished my letter to you about the petition, of my own self having something to do with the proprietorship of Drury Lane, by virtue of five shares given to me when I was a child? I really never thought of it. But I thought afterwards that if you ever came to guess at such a thing, why you might infer me into basenesses. The shares never reminded me of their being mine by one penny coming to my hands, nor are likely to do so—the national theaters being as empty of profit as of honor. But if it were otherwise, you couldn't suspect me of being warped by such a consideration—you

will trust me that half-cubit of probity, without another word.

“E. B. B.”

XIII. [With pen-and-ink profile of Keats at head.]

“Dec. 29th, 1842.

“Tell me, Mr. Horne — is it like? to Keats, I mean. My hands have the ague this morning. Otherwise it would be a copy of a sketch of Keats; and I want to know if you have any recognition. For my own part, my observation is — I am afraid almost of saying it — that there is a resemblance between the mouth in this sketch and that which I blasphemed against in a certain miniature — resolute fifth-act lips! Do confess — supposing that you preserve for me any common degree of patience — whether any one in the world ever detected a likeness between the two poets in question.

“The world is better than I imagined, and since I wrote to you about book-sellers, I have had an inkling of a reason for believing what I had not faith for previously, that in

the case of my resolving to deliver up a volume of poems to my own former publisher, he would print it 'without being paid for it.' And now perhaps I *sha'n't* print it, out of the spirit of contradiction.

"Ever and truly,

"E. B. B."

XIV.

"June 14th, 1843.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I have read and forwarded your letter to Miss Mitford — who tells me in a letter yesterday (a cross-stitch), that in spite of all I can say, she is glad of having written to you, because you '*will be obliged to say something in your answer.*' Well! I also am glad that somebody is curious besides myself; and I am not sorry that the somebody should be herself, being jealous of her 'with Styx nine times round me,' in natural proportion to her degree of glory and victory and twenty-five promised copies!

"Very well, Mr. Horne!

"'It is quite useless,' said I to Miss Mitford, 'that you should make *your* applica-

tion! *Have I not asked for six copies, and been refused?*' Now carry the result of the application historically downwards — and me with it!

"As to your suggestion about the compromise of her and my struggling heroically for these *spolia opima* — really, you can know little of what heroes, female heroes, are made, to suggest such a thing! I have told Miss Mitford (to disabuse you at once) that not if she and you asked me on your four knees to touch a page of the twenty-five would I consent to such a thing—I make feminine oath against it—I DON'T CHOOSE TO DO IT. I won't have one of them—no, nor of any others in their stead.

"Very well, Mr. Horne!

"After all, it is not (seriously) so very ill; because she may have (has probably) twenty-five or more 'learned and accomplished friends,' and I have not; and Mr. Miller will probably be in a better humor in a second edition than his advertisement gives us present hope of; and I recognize at once the fact

that you should not be asked to give your books away actually as a consequence of your doing so virtually. Virtually — not virtuously. Not in the least do I approve of your distributing the second edition in the manner of the first. The cause of it, and the object in it, are inscrutable to me — particularly as I don't hold to the common opinion that much poetry has made the author mad. Papa says, 'Perhaps he is going to shoot the Queen, and is preparing evidence of monomania' — an ingenious conjecture, but not altogether satisfactory.

"I have seen no criticism at all. The stargazers will all have their glasses up, of course, 'while this new planet swims into their ken.' But 'Orion' is a constellation, isn't he?

"Pity my astronomy, if not my ill-temper — which last may not be quite so bad as it seems.

"Ever yours,

"E. B. B."

The next letter was written under the influ-

ence of a sadness, the cause of which is not expressed ; it also refers to some matters connected with the gratuitous circulation of "Orion."¹

XV.

"WIMPOLE STREET,

"June 16th, 1843.

"I am sorry, my dear Mr. Horne, at your remaining unwell against all my hopes, but I am more sorry than I was this morning at having written a very silly note to you a few days since.

"That it was simply silly — meaning that it wasn't *seriously* silly, I beg you to believe. I am apt to write the thought or the jest — as it may be — which is uppermost — and sometimes, too, when it is not uppermost ; I struggle against a sadness which is strong, by putting a levity in the place of it. Now you will wonder what I have been writing, if you

¹ Published originally at a nominal price, to save the author the expense and trouble of sending copies to his numerous friends. Mr. Horne made two stipulations with his publisher: first, that no person should be supplied with more than one copy; and secondly, that no copy should be sent to any person who called it "Orion." — S. R. T. M.

have not received the note yet — and so I will explain to you that it was only some foolishness about the twenty-five copies — about Miss Mitford's victory, and my defeat, x. z. λ.

“My grave and real thoughts are these, that I think you exceedingly kind to both of us — kinder than you ought to be. And then she has more in her power — she can do more for the poem — she counts an amount of learned and accomplished friends above any person I ever knew or heard of. And for a good private advertiser, never was any one superior to her own self. For which reasons I would rather give up the whole twenty-five copies to her, and so I have told her, without a reserve of five or one for myself. I have one copy from you already, which I keep in my covetousness, as your gift, and the few others I require shall be arrived at by your instructions from this second edition — or the twenty-second. On the success of the poem I congratulate you and everybody worthy of the joy of it. Still the very success must be

loss in a certain way — and I can not help wishing that it had been otherwise.

“ Ever truly yours,

“ E. B. B. ’

XVI.

“ July 7th, 1843.

“ The lady’s name is Cockell, Miss Cockell, Katherine Cockell, and she lives in Livonia Cottage, about a mile from Sidmouth, in Devonshire, where we resided once for two years. She was an invalid, poor thing, then, and sent to ask me to go to see her — which I did at great expense of shyness. But *that* you won’t believe, because, as Mr. Kenyon says, I grow insolent when I have a pen in my hand, and you know me only ‘ by that sign.’ I sometimes doubt to myself (do you know, besides) whether if I should ever be face to face with you, the shame and the shyness would not annihilate the pleasure of it to me! I really think they would — but this not what I was going to say.

“ Poor Miss C—— was always an interesting person in my eyes. She is full of enthu

siasm of heart, which overflows itself over all things — and then I believe her to be very, very solitary in the most painful sense — desolate in her affections — left alone without an answering sympathy. I do not know the particular circumstances; and once, when she was inclined to enter on them, I begged her, observing the pain it gave her, not to go on; this anatomizing of life-diseases by retrospection being dreadful and useless. But I see that she is very unhappy — or rather, that she has been much afflicted — and that the shadow of the sorrow and an actual most desolate solitude are with her now. She has a fine apprehension of beauty and greatness, as you perceive, a sensitiveness of the spiritual sense, and a natural exaltation, perfectly unaffected and un-put-on. Once she said to me what I never shall forget. Making an ungenerous inference from the fact of pain being connected with the affections, I had observed that I would refuse to know anybody, man, woman, or child, whom I was likely to love and be loved by intensely. ‘Oh,’ she said, ‘is it

possible you can say so? I would walk like a pilgrim to the end of the world to find *one* who would love me and whom I could love.' That was the true feeling—generous and worthy of love, and I recognized it when I heard it, just as we recognize the right word in a flowing poem, which the memory had missed, when it is spoken suddenly before us. And she is full of such instincts. I mean to send your note to her, because it is sure to give her pleasure; and as you had hers, it is only fair that she should have yours in turn.

"By the way, you have charmed Miss Mitford by your last note of acceptance of her hospitalities.

" 'A charming note,' she calls it. And so you are going to enact 'Orion' with the harp under the bay-tree! I am very glad of it. And by the way, again, you are gracious to our sex in receiving her remark upon what women do in opposition to what men do—and perhaps just. Certainly the discrimination of the beautiful is the art of criticism,—and not the finding of faults. And 'therefore

her remark and your consent to it would prove women to be generally better judges of poetry because more sensitive to the faculty than men are. Of this I can not help doubting a little. How many bright eyes, yes, and 'beautiful smiles' besides, I have known, to whom poetry is really nothing, startles me when I think of it—it is such a playing at cross-purposes with nature! That 'beautiful smile' we both know, which will grow more radiant for music, fades away out of its own gloriole at any talk about poetry. Be sure that the poetical sense, even in *apprehension*, is a rare thing among men, and among women not less so.

"Mr. Kenyon was with me yesterday, and praised 'Orion' most admiringly. He had read it only in parts yet, through a press of occupation, but he had from these parts, he said, the same sort of pleasure as from Keats's 'Endymion' or 'Hyperion;' and what particularly charmed him was the versification. He accused me of the 'Athenæum' paper, and convicted me against my will; and

when I could no longer deny, and began to explain and 'pique myself upon my diplomacy,' he threw himself back into his chair, and laughed me to scorn as the least diplomatic of his acquaintance. 'You diplomatic!'

"Truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"Mr. Kenyon said, besides the rest, 'Orion has very much raised my opinion of Mr. Horne's power.' "

XVII

"July 13, 1843.

"DEAR MR. HORNE, — I return the magazines and letters, with thanks to you for the great pleasure which in many ways they have given to me. I am a sort of believer in handwriting divination, and took interest in the very shapes of their respective alphabets, — and then it is delightful to see how the feeling for 'Orion' spreads and deepens in all classes and minds — how not a single note of the octave, along which you trailed your finger, is dumb or responseless. Yes, that last review

does you fuller justice than the others — indeed, very full justice, as it seems to me. But won't the 'Westminster Review' speak out, as it ought? Won't your friends of the 'Church of England Quarterly' help you in any wise? And will no one climb to the heights of the 'Edinburgh' with the new epic in his hand? These are wishes rather than questions. I will be innocent of teasing you to-day.

"Sincerely yours,

"ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.

"Shyness imply *doubt*? Surely not — except it be doubt of one's self. But it is a species of consciousness which is, as Miss Mitford observes wisely, resolvable into self-love, subtilize about it as we may. Only perhaps in some cases, and where there is no reserve of character to *background* it, the nerves, considered physically, should be justly obliged to bear the blame. I hope so, but do not know it. One thing I know, that I can not be innocent of teasing you, let my resolutions set in ever so well!

“Adieu — you won’t hear from me again these two months to come.”

It has been mentioned that, at the request of Miss Barrett, I contributed to an Annual edited by Miss Mitford, and as this was the means of my introduction to the authoress of “Our Village,” who is referred to in the next letter, it may be as well at this point to give the reader my recollections of that charming and accomplished lady.

There used to be, and there no doubt still is, if I had but the courage to go and look at it, a small, old-fashioned cottage at Three-mile Cross, near Reading, which stood in a garden close to the road. A strip of garden was on one side, a little pony-stable on the other, and the larger part of the garden at the back. It was a comfortable-looking, but still a real village cottage, with no town or suburb look whatever about it. Small lattice windows, below and above, with roses and jasmine creeping round them all, established its rural character; and there was a great but-

trellis of a chimney rising from the ground at the garden-strip side, which was completely covered with a very ancient and very fine apricot-tree. There the birds delighted to sit and sing among the leaves, and build too, in several snug nooks, and there in early autumn the wasps used to bite and bore into the rich ripe brown cracks of the largest apricots, and would issue forth in rage when any one of the sweetest of their property was brought down to the earth by the aid of a clothes-prop, guided under the superintending instructions of a venerable little gentlewoman in a garden-bonnet and shawl, with silver hair, very bright hazel eyes, and a rose-red smiling countenance. Altogether, it was one of the brightest faces any one ever saw.

“Now, my dear friend,” would she say, “if you will only attend to my advice, you will get that apricot up there, which is quite in perfection. I have had my eye upon it these last three weeks, wondering nobody stole it. The boys often get over into the garden before any of us are up. There now,

collect all those leaves, if you will be so good — and those too — and lay them all in a heap just underneath, so that the apricot may fall upon them. If you don't do that, it will burst open with a thump. There! now push the prop up slowly, so as to break the apricot from the stalk; and when it is down, do not be in too great a hurry to take it up, as it's sure to have a good large wasp or two inside. Wasps are capital judges of ripe wall-fruit, as my dear father used to say. A little lower with the prop! — more to the left — now just push the prong upwards, and gently lift — again — down it comes! Mind the wasps! — three, four — mind! — perhaps that's not all — five! — I told you so!"

"How angry they are!"

"Not more, my dear friend, than you and I would have been under similar circumstances."

I had not known Miss Mitford very long at this time; but it was her habit to address all those with whom she was on intimate

terms, by some affectionate expression. For several years, however, I used to pay a visit of a week or ten days to Miss Mitford's cottage during the strawberry season, and again during the middle of summer, when her show of geraniums (she resisted all new nomenclatures) was at its height, and sometimes later, when the wonderful old fruit-trees just retained some half-dozen of their choicest treasures. It would be impossible for any engraving or photograph, however excellent as to features, to convey a true likeness of Mary Russell Mitford. During one of these visits, Miss Charlotte Cushman was also staying at the cottage, and exclaimed the first time Miss Mitford left the room, "What a bright face it is!" This effect of summer brightness all over the countenance was quite remarkable. A floral flush overspread the whole face, which seemed to carry its own light with it, for it was the same indoors as out. The silver hair shone, the forehead shone, the cheeks shone, and, above all, the eyes shone. The expression

was entirely genial, cognoscitive, beneficent. The outline of the face was an oblate round, of no very marked significance beyond that of an apple, or other rural "character;" in fact, it was very like a rosy apple in the sun. Always excepting the forehead and chin. The forehead was not only massive, but built in a way that sculpture only could adequately delineate. Miss Barrett, in a note to a friend concerning Miss Mitford, described her forehead as of the ancient Greek type, and compared it to her idea of *Aktinetos*, or the Great Unmoved,¹ although we may doubt whether the amiable authoress of "Our Village" would have felt very much pleased or complimented by the unexpected comparison. Howbeit, this brain-structure accounted to me for the fact that Miss Mitford's conversation was often very superior to any thing in her books. Having on one occasion suggested this, she said, smiling: "Well, you see, my dear friend, we must take the world as we find it, and it doesn't do to say to

¹ In Mr. Horne's poem of "Orion." — Ed.

everybody, all that you would say to one here and there." And presently afterwards, when alluding to several persons, without mentioning any names, for she was a very politic lady of the old school, Miss Mitford added: "One has to think twice before speaking once, in order to come down to them; like talking to children."

This build of head, and strong outline of head and face, will go far to explain the strength of character displayed by Miss Mitford during the early and most trying periods of her life, with her extravagant and selfish father. It may also equally account for her general composure and presence of mind, both on great occasions and others, trifling enough to talk and write about, but of a kind to test the nerves of most ladies. For instance, in driving Miss Mitford one day in her little pony-chaise on a morning visit, she so riveted my attention on the special point of a story, that I allowed one wheel to run into a dry ditch at the roadside, and the pony-chaise must of course have turned over, but that we

were "brought up" by the hedge. "Hillo! my dear friend!" said Miss Mitford; "we must get out." We did so; the little trap was at once put on its proper course, and, without one word of comment, the bright-faced old lady took up the thread of her story.

Her favorite seat in the cottage, in the garden, and in the large greenhouse where she received visitors during the "strawberry season" (her usual definition of certain months) I have not revisited, and had better never do so.

In the next letter there are more half-veiled allusions to "Psyche," and to a certain report in one of the Government blue-books.¹

XVIII.

"August 7th, 1843. Monday.

"I *did* guess a little that when you were talking mysteriously, you were talking *psychologically*. And also, from the silence afterwards, I inferred before you stated the fact to me, that the intention failed again by the

¹ Mr. Horne's Report on the "Employment of Children in Mines and Manufactories."—S. R. T. M.

fatality. Be sure that the Fates are sworn against us—be as sure of it as I am! For the immediate failure I am not sorry; having one or two poems of different sizes (none very large) on my hands; and being rather bent on preparations for that volume of my own, which, in its undeveloped state, has already served to illustrate its author's self-will. If you ever look into 'Blackwood,' condescend this month to look at *me*. Because my 'Cry of the Children' owes its utterance to your exciting causations. To-day I shall see your 'Old Problem,'¹ of which the critics do prophesy good things. I salute 'Orion' in the fifth edition.

"At four o'clock to-morrow you will be at Three-mile Cross, and at four o'clock to-day I shall be peradventure in my chair for the second time. When I write to tell Miss Mitford vain-gloriously that the ivy planted in a box in my window-sill has taken root, flourished,

¹ A poem by Mr. Horne, which appeared in Douglas Jerrold's "Illuminated Magazine," with a large vignette by Kenny Meadows, of the "Poet, the Stoic, and the Fool," in one united or tri-unal head. —S. R. T. M.

and spread itself in green boughs and tendrils over the window, until I sit in the green light of the woods, she answers (oh, hard of heart!) that she has roses round *her* window. There is the like analogy in our fates, yours and mine, — and we think to write ‘*Psyches*’ together!

“I heard of ‘*Orion*’ the other day being admired at the first glance, and carried away to be admired at leisure, by Mrs. Jameson. You admire Mrs Jameson, I am sure, as I do, and will be sensitive to her admiration. She has a fine aspiring spirit — noble instinct for greatness — and she can write very eloquently. Is ‘*Orion*’ in the fiftieth edition!!

“Do tell me how you are pleased, and exactly how you are impressed by the visit to Three-mile Cross. I will be secret beyond womanity, if you are frank beyond discretion. Barter your impressions with me, my dear Mr. Horne.

“Ever truly yours,

“ELIZABETH B. BARRETT.”

The next letter is valuable for the opinion it expresses of Harriet Martineau, from whom not long since I received a note written whilst lying in a similar state to that described by Miss Barrett with such simple and pathetic grandeur in 1843.

XIX.

“August 31st, 1843.

[Apparently from Wimpole Street.]

“Ah, my dear Mr. Horne, while you are praising the weather — stroking the sleek sunshine — it has been, not exactly killing me, but striking me vigorously with intent to kill. It was intensely hot, and I went out in the chair, and was over-excited and over-tired, I suppose; at least, the next day I was ill, shivering in the sun, and lapsing into a weariness it is not easy for me to rally from. Yet everybody has been ill — which, in the way of pure benevolence, ought to be a comfort to me; and now I am well again. And the weather is certainly lovely and bright by fits, and I join you in praising the beauty and glory of it: but then, you must admit that

the *fits*, the spasmodic changes of the temperature from sixty-one degrees to eighty-one, and back again, are trying to mortal frames, more especially to those conscious of the frailty of the 'native mud' in them. If I had the wings of a dove, and could flee away to the south of France, I should be cooing peradventure instead of moaning. Only, I could not *leave every thing* — even then! I must stay, as well as go — under any circumstances — dove or woman.

"By the way, two of my brothers are on the Rhine at this moment. They have gone, to my pain and pleasure, to see Geneva, and come home at the end of six weeks, by Paris, to replunge (one of them) into law.

"It pleases me to think of dear Miss Mitford reading my 'House of Clouds' to you, with her 'melodious feeling' for poetry, and the sweeter melody of her kindliness; and it moreover pleased me to know that you liked it in any measure. To show the difference of possible opinions, Mr. Boyd told me that 'he had read my papers on the Greek fathers' [in

the 'Athenæum,' I think], 'with the more satisfaction, because he had inferred from my "House of Clouds" that illness had *impaired my faculties.*' Ah, but I hope to do something yet, better than the past. I hope, and shall struggle to it.

"I have had a great pleasure lately in some correspondence with Miss Martineau, the noblest female intelligence between the seas, — 'as sweet as spring, as ocean deep.' She is in a hopeless anguish of body, and serene triumph of spirit, with at once no hope and all hope! To hear from her was both a pleasure and honor to me.

"Last week a voice spake to me out of a beautiful smile — 'Ask Mr. Horne if he has given me up for ever, and tell him that I still live at E—— S——.'

"Very truly yours,

"ELIZABETH B. BARRETT."

We will conclude this first of the series of Letters by a choice morsel of graphic criticism on a certain clerical celebrity, — showing how

that frail little arm, being put forth from a sofa, could wield a gleaming broadsword, and strike home, either with impassioned eye, or, as in the present instance, with a forehead beaming with mixed indignation and irony.

XX.

“WIMPOLE STREET,

“Dec. 16th, 1843.

“I am so glad to hear that nothing really very bad is the matter with Tennyson. If any thing were to happen to Tennyson, the world should go into mourning.

“Did I ever tell you that I once wrote to him, and had a note from him? Thus it was. Some friendly American sent me last year a newspaper, containing a review of his poetry, and requested me to forward it to him, knowing my direction, and not his. I was embarrassed to know what to do; and more especially so as the review was cautious in its admiration. At last I wrote a brief statement of the facts of the case, and sent the newspaper. I was quite ashamed of myself and my newspaper; but he was good enough

to forgive me for an involuntary forwardness. The people in Yankeeland, I observe, think that we in England all live in a house together — particularly we who write books. The idea of the absence of forests and savannas annihilates with them the idea of distance.

“I am content — in relation to poetry — I can understand perfectly. Perhaps, however, you have underrated certain perceptions of an individual, of poetry in its highest order. The individual in my mind (probably different from the individual in yours) can appreciate Tennyson, Wordsworth, Keats, and your ‘Cosmo.’ Still, I admit that I should shrink a little from the suggested hot plowshare of your magnificent

‘Oblivion, crown’d with infinite blank stars;’

because certainly there is a mystical effluence of poetry (a highest height over the highest height) in Wordsworth, Tennyson, Keats, which escapes the individuality of *my* individual — always did, and must. But now, I think, we have written into about as thick a

fog as obliged us to light the candles at noon a few days since. Only I don't mean to light the candles here.

"I have not the 'Blackwood' in question. I could send for the number, but can not remember definitely. I think it came out just after the 'Seraphim' — in 1839, was it not? — and I think the paper called itself 'Our Two Vases,' that being a current title of a series of critical papers by Christopher North. Mr. Milnes and I were reviewed together in the paper I refer to, and we had it to ourselves.

"No — I did not suppose that the opinion I sent to you amounted to much; but I will send you one, since you care to have it. Also, he and I were associated together with Mr. Sterling, and one or two more 'Blackwood' poets, in the 'North American Review' of last year. Mr. Milnes was treated unworthily in it, I think, and overthrown for want of imagination and fire. They behaved very generously to me, and, after sundry admonitions, unquestionably founded, dismissed me with a laurel-branch. This paper was written, I


have since ascertained, by the Head of Harvard College, Boston — or perhaps ‘ascertained’ may be too hard and self-satisfied a word — say ‘believed’ instead.

“So, Tennyson is ‘pretty,’ is he? Did I ever tell you that I heard a lady — a countess — by the order of St. Louis! — say, ‘The latter part of Homer is certainly very pretty’? These are your critics, O Israel!

“For my own part, I was going to observe (when I last wrote to you) that I should be satisfied, in the case of a certain moral enmity, with such an execration as, ‘Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!’ I stopped the pen, because it struck me as too savage. I will say it now, though.

“Mr. Lough is engaged on a bust of poor Southey, which is said to be fine, and resembling. His widow went to see it the other day.

“The anonymous ‘Life in the Sick Room,’ by an invalid, is by Miss Martineau, and worthy of her; full of noble Christian philosophy, and most affecting, through its very calmness.



"I can not write any more -- which is lucky, I believe.

"Yours truly,

"E. B. B."

"You will be glad to hear that dear Miss Mitford has been chosen Honorary Member of the new Literary Institute, under Buckingham. They have also chosen Agnes Strickland, to prevent any unpleasantness to Miss Mitford, from the circumstance of her being the only woman.

"Talking of poets -- no, not talking of poets, but thinking of poets -- are you aware, O Orion, that the most popular poet alive is the Reverend Robert Montgomery, who walks into his twenty and somethingth edition 'like nothing'? I mean the author of 'Satan;' 'Woman;' 'Omnipresence of the Deity;' 'The Messiah;' the least of these being in its teens of editions, and the greatest not worth a bark of my Flushie's! Mr. Flushie is more of a poet, by the shining of his eyes! But is it not wonderful that this man who waves his

white handkerchief from the pulpit till the tears run in rivulets all round, should have another trick of oratory (as good) where he can't show the ring on his little finger? I really do believe that the 'Omnipresence of the Deity' is in the twenty-fourth edition, or beyond it, — a fact that can not be stated in respect to Wordsworth after all these years."



II.

“CHAUCER MODERNIZED.”

Origin of the Work—I accept the Editorship—**My Collaborators**—Miss Barrett's Qualifications for the Task she undertook—Wordsworth's and Landor's Opinion—Bulwer's View—The Principle adopted—Leigh Hunt's Dissent from it—Specimens of Miss Barrett's Version of “The Complaint of Annelida” — Her Method of arranging the Rhymes—Miss Barrett's Opinion of her Coadjutors' Work—Specimens of Printers' Proofs with Marginalla—Leigh Hunt's Broad Theory—Translations of Shelley, Oxenford and Denis Florence MacCarthy—Recollections of Robert Bell—Thackeray.

IN 1841, a project was set on foot (by Wordsworth, I believe) for giving the world, for the first time, a true yet polished modernization of the Father of English Poetry. All previous so-called modernizations of Chaucer (with the single exception of Lord Thurlow's

rendering of the "Knight's Tale") had been, at best, paraphrases, *ad libitum* translations, or gross parodies and desecrations of the homely power, beauty, graphic richness, and quaint humor of the original. Of the fact that Chaucer was not only a versifier of wonderful variety, but that (so far as we can discover and imagine the actual quantities he used and intended us to read) he was a master of versification, and this in himself, and without considering the age in which he wrote, not the remotest recognition had ever been shown. It was agreed that this project should be carried out by Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, Miss Barrett, Robert Bell, Monckton Milnes, Dr. Leonhard Schmitz, and myself. Some difficulty was experienced in the choice of an editor. Wordsworth, being in years, and residing at a distance, would not accept the post. The next in seniority was Leigh Hunt, who was living near London, and in all respects suitable as a most accomplished reader and lover of Chaucer. But he was too wise; he "smelt the battle afar off;" and, as

Wordsworth, to whom several of us had sent poems we had modernized, had written to London to say that my rendering of "The Franklin's Tale" was "as well done as any lover of Chaucer's poetry need or can desire,"¹ the editorship was offered to me. To my subsequent regret, hard work, waste of time in verbal conflicts, countless vexations—yet pride, withal—I accepted the office "little dreaming."

After the first volume had been satisfactorily launched, a second was contemplated, for which it was intended to request the co-operation of Tennyson, Talfourd, Browning, Sir E. L. Bulwer, Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke, and Mary Howitt.

¹ [In a letter to Mr. Henry Reed of Philadelphia ("Memoirs of William Wordsworth." By Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., 1851, vol. ii., pp. 375), Wordsworth says—"There has recently been published in London a volume of some of Chaucer's tales and poems modernized. This little specimen originated in what I attempted with the 'Prioress's Tale;' and if the book should find its way to America you will see in it two further specimens from myself. Let me recommend to your notice the 'Prologue' and the 'Franklin's Tale;' they are both by Mr. Horne, a gentleman unknown to me, but are, the latter in particular, very well done."—S. R. T. M.]

Miss Barrett, though still supposed to be hovering near the grave, cheerfully, and with enthusiasm, agreed to lend her aid to the work. And it is a great pleasure to recollect that everybody to whom I applied cordially consented, with the exception of Landor, who, however, objected in a form that could not be displeasing to those engaged in this labor of love. His first reply was that he believed "as many people read Chaucer" (meaning in the original) "as were fit to read him." As I took leave to doubt this, Landor again wrote saying — "Indeed I *do* admire him, or rather love him. In my opinion, he is fairly worth a score or two of Spensers. He had a knowledge of human nature, and not of doll-making and *fantoccini* dressing. 'Imagination' seems to our poets and critics to be the faculty of devising a rare quantity of small images." Adding — "Pardon me if I say I would rather see Chaucer quite alone, in the dew of his sunny morning, than with twenty clever gentlefolks about him, arranging his shoe-strings and buttoning his doub-

let. I like even his *language*. I will have no hand in breaking his dun but rich-painted glass, to put in (if clearer) much thinner panes.” And thus, — with the true, but narrow, devotion of the best men on the black-letter side, and their resistance to all attempts to melt the obsolete language and form it into modern moulds, — and the stolidity of a British public on another side, the Homer of English Poetry continues unread, except by very few. Had Chaucer’s poems been written in Greek or Hebrew, they would have been a thousand times better known — they would have been translated again and again, year after year.¹

Writing to Sir E. L. Bulwer, the principle I proposed for acceptance was, that the best way of doing the work would be gracefully and poetically to retain as much of the original language of Chaucer as possible. Wordsworth had at once coincided in this; so had Miss Barrett, and so did all the rest but Leigh Hunt, who did not altogether

¹ [See the Introduction by R. H. Horne. — Ed.]

incide. And the more he worked at the modernization, the less he agreed with that principle, and I fully admit there is much to be said for his view of the matter.

We all commenced. Wordsworth gave a version of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," an extract from "Troilus and Cressida," and virtually modernized the whole of "The Flower and the Leaf," by the re-writings and general labor he bestowed upon it for somebody else. Leigh Hunt modernized "The Manciple's Tale," "The Friar's Tale," and "The Squire's Tale;" and Miss Barrett modernized "Queen Annelida and False Arcite," and "The Complaint of Annelida." The remainder of the volume comprised the "Life of Chaucer," by Dr. Leonhard Schmitz; Eulogies on Chaucer by his contemporaries, and a sonnet by Charles Wells, author of "Joseph and his Brethren;" and the modernizations and other work, by the Editor and by Robert Bell.

The poem selected by Miss Barrett presented one peculiar feature, being the first of

its kind, systematically carried out, that is to be found in English Poetry. Generally, the lady adhered to the principle laid down; but the peculiarity alluded to is to be found in two stanzas only of the present poem, which we will first give in the original, so that readers may judge how the work has been performed.

*THE COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO
FALSE ARCITE.*

VII.

*But for I was so plaine to The Arcite,
In all my wordes and workis moche and lite,
And was so besy aye you to delite,
Myne honour only save meke, kind, and fre,
Therfore Arcite ye put in me this wite,
Alas ! Alas ! ye reckon not a mite
Though that the percing swerde of sorow kyte
My woful hert, thorough your cruellite.*

VIII.

*My swete foe, why do ye so for shame ?
And thinkin ye that furthered be your name
To lovin a newe, and ben untrewes aye,
And putin you in slaundir nowe and blame,*

And working *me* adversity,
The same,
Who loves you most — (O God thou know'st!)
Always?
Yet turn again — be fair and plain
Some day;
And then shall this, that seems amiss,
Be game,
All being forgiv'n, while yet from heav'n
I stay.

It will have been perceived that in Miss Barrett's stanza viii. the rhymes are concealed as in the body of the original, both being in the ten-syllable measure in which Chaucer has written the greater part of the poem.

XV.

*The longe night this wondir syght I drie,
That on the day, for soche Affray I dye,
And of al this right naught twys ye retche,
Ne nevirmoe myne eytn two ben drye,
And to your routh, and to your trouthe I crye,
But wel away ! to ferre ben they to fetch,
Thus hokleth me my destiny a wretche,
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wit (so weke is it) not stretch.*

Miss Barrett, in her modernization of this, adopted the same arrangement of the rhymes as in stanza viii. Some persons rather blamed her for so doing, and wrongly; for she might, with equal justification, have arranged them in the following order, showing how "cunning an artificer" was the "Father of English Poetry," who is fancied to be rough and crude by those who do not know him.

STANZA XV.

Through the long night
This wondrous sight,

Bear I,
Which haunted still
The daylight, till
I die;

But nought of this,
Your heart, I wis,
Can reach.

Mine eyes down pour,
They never more

Are dry,
While to your ruth,
And eke your truth,
I cry —

But, welladay,
Too far be they
 To fetch.
Thus destiny
Is holding me —
 Ah, wretch!
And when I fain
Would break the chain
 And try —
Falleth my wit
(So weak is it)
 With speech.

The following is the first letter I can find on this subject, evidently written after receiving proofs of some portion of the book.

XXI.

[Postmark — TORQUAY]

"Dec. 17th, 1840.

"I did not say half enough about the 'Introduction.' The apotheosis of Chaucer, or rather your witness to his poetic devoutness, is very beautiful, — and that passage, for instance, about the greenness of his green leaves, and the whiteness of his daisies (so true, that is!), and above all, a noble para-

graph close to the end, testifying to the devotional verity of every veritable poet. I have read it again and again.

"Notwithstanding all the merit and the grace, do not some of the poems militate against the principle you set out with? I venture to think that the re-fashioners stand — some of them, and in a measure — too far from Chaucer's side — however graceful the attitude. You, yourself, and Wordsworth are most devoutly near. *Most* of the contributors are so, but not all, for even Mr. Leigh Hunt is sometimes satisfied with being with Chaucer in the spirit, and spurns the accidents of body. But Mr. Bell's 'Mars and Venus' is too smooth and varnished, and redolent of the nineteenth century, as appears to me, for spirit *or* body. I think people will say, you might 'keep more Chaucer.' But, however, they mayn't; and if they are not (say what they please) delighted with this volume, this breathing of sweet souths over the bank of deathless violets, there can be no room for delight in their souls.

"Papa has been to leave his card upon you, as he tells me. He is a very bad visitor, or would have done it long ago — with his strong impression of all your kindness towards one of his family. Do go and see them in Wimpole Street, dear Mr. Horne, some day when you are in the neighborhood — before I am there — if really it is not out of all order in me to say such a thing. But it would give them such real pleasure to know you, I am very sure; and, besides, I shall like to think that they do.

"Very truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"No, we don't agree; and I want to set up, not the contrariety, but the identity of the principle of Greek versification and ours."

The postscript alludes to our projected lyrical drama of "Psyche."

One of the printer's proofs of part of my work — all of which I sent to Miss Barrett and to Leigh Hunt, asking for their comments

and proposed revisions, in the same way that I had given mine upon theirs — may afford a slight notion of the literary, philological, and archaeological queries and contests that attended this very proper process. Here are a few of the marginal and foot notes.

R. H. "Love will not be constrained by mastery.

When mastery cometh, the God of Love, anon
Beateth his wings — and, farewell! he is gone."

E. B. In the second line "comes," says Chaucer,
and more smoothly.

R. H. Yes, more smoothly, but not so Chaucerian
in its variety of rhythm. Does your copy
print it "comes"? What edition have you?
Mine reads "cometh."

The above is a celebrated passage which
has been copied, paraphrastically, by Pope,
and others, without acknowledgment. To
continue: --

R. H. "After a time there must be temperance
In every man that knows self-governance."

E. B. B. I don't think it means self-governance, but
governance generally. If so, "that knoweth
governance" would be right.

R. H. "His presence aye desiring, so distraineth,"

E. B. B. Why not,

"The yearning for his presence so constraineth,"

R. H. Yes, far better.

R. H. "Progressively, as know ye every one,

Men may engrave and work upon a stone

Till that some figure there imprinted be;

So long her friends have soothed her heart,"

etc.

E. B. B. "Men may engrave so *long* upon a stone,"

etc. Shouldn't it suit the other clause?

R. H. Yes, no doubt.

R. H. "Or else the sorrow had her heart *yslain*."

E. B. B. Dare you say "*yslain*"? Why not, —

"Thro' sorrow had her heart been slain."

R. H. Yes, more prudently, and perhaps as good.

R. H. "The odor of flowers and freshness of the
night

Would any heart have filled and made it light,

That ever was born," etc.

E. B. B. Is it not rough?

R. H. No, it is Chaucer's harmonious wavy lift and
roll, as explained in the "Introduction." It
would of course be unwieldy if tried by
Pope's regular finger-scanning by syllables,
instead of Chaucer's *beats* of time.

R. H. "And home all wend with ease, and full of
glee,

Save wretched Aurelius — none was sad but
he."

E. B. B. Rough — is it not?

R. H. No; it is Chaucer's lifting rhythm. And if
it were rough, I should retain it for its
"wretched" effect.

R. H. "Your blissful sister, Lucina the sheen," etc.

E. B. B. Qy. the "Lucina." Don't you adjust
Chaucer's bad quantities?

R. H. I left that, and others in the proofs, to see
what you and Leigh Hunt would say. I
suppose we must alter false quantities.
Would Landor retain them, black letter and
all?

R. H. "His brother weepeth and wailleth privately."

E. B. B. The meter would be freer without the
"and," I think.

R. H. *Stet* the "and," for Chaucerian reasons pre-
viously given. The same with regard to
several others you have marked.

R. H. "But that a clerk should do a gentle deed
As well as any wight of whom we read."

E. B. B. Doesn't Chaucer mean as well as *either*
of *you* — knight or squire?

"But that a clerk a noble deed should do
Is certain sooth, as well as either of you."

R. H. Yes, you are right; and I like the Chaucerian
rhythm of your second line at the close; "as

well as *ëither-öf-yöu*," I propose to alter thus —

"But that a clerk a gentle deed should do
As well — ne'er doubt it — as this knight or
you."

R. H. "For, Sir, I will not take a penny of thee
For all my craft, nor aught for my *travaille*:
Thou hast sufficient paid by my *vitaille*."

E. B. B. I hate and detest those words. Chaucer
wouldn't use them *now*. Now, would he?
Besides, I doubt the meaning given to the
latter line being quite the right one. How
impertinent! but this is *colophon* to the
whole. I fancy something of this sort, —

"For all my craft, and all my labor given:
For hospitality, we two are even."

R. H. Sorry to give up the two old words of the
original; but I adopt your suggestion.

E. B. B. Last line of all stands thus in my black
letter, —

"He took his horse, and rode forth on his way."

R. H. Not so in mine. What is the date of yours —
and its pedigree?

These selections from the marginalia on
the proofs of a single tale, modernized by the
Editor, may give some faint conception of
what occurred when Leigh Hunt dealt with

my proofs, and I with his. By his seniority in years and literary experience, in addition to his early studies of Chaucer and critical essays, I was prepared for abundant difficulties; but it will be seen how all these were increased when he announced — after we had all commenced upon the plan of as close a literal reading as was compatible with poetical as well as metrical requirements — that he was quite opposed to our leading principle. He announced this, in returning the proofs of my version of the "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales," crowded with revisions on the opposite theory. Of course I accepted as much as I could without violating my own ideas of truthfulness; and I am quite prepared to admit that in all difficult or doubtful passages, a rendering in the spirit would probably be far superior to adhering to the letter. The door, however, Leigh Hunt proposed to open would let in "black spirits and white," true spirits and false; and in dealing with a great author, it is right to be on the safe side. The translations of Shelley from the Greek, Italian,

German, and Spanish, seem to me as near to perfection as possible. These are in many parts as fine as their originals; and with respect to his translations from Goethe's “Walpurgis Nacht,” and “El Magico Prodigioso” of Calderon, I consider them not only faithful, but finer than the originals. The same method was not so fitting in Leigh Hunt; and it would be fitting to very few. Shelley was a great poet, and not unlike Calderon, in several characteristics; — Leigh Hunt, though an elegant and delightful poet, was not a great poet, and not at all like Chaucer. As to the principle at issue, the close literal translations of John Oxenford from Calderon seem to me very preferable to the fancies many a gentleman might indulge in, and call it the “spirit” of that poet (because it was his own spirit); while the nearest combination of the poetical with the all-but literal, in the present day, is to be found in Denis Florence MacCarthy's translations from the Spanish, even though he does this “in the meters of the original.” Still

they do not approach what Shelley has done. To return to Leigh Hunt, the opinion of Miss Barrett as to his renderings of Chaucer seems to me quite correct; and most gracefully as he did his part in the "Chaucer Modernized," I prefer what was done by Wordsworth and Miss Barrett, with the understanding that the poems they selected would not be so interesting in themselves, to most people, as those selected by Leigh Hunt.

The subject of rhymes generally is reserved for a future section, but I may mention here in connection with Leigh Hunt that so strong is the force of habit, that he, with all his long poetical experience, upon coming to a couplet where the words *arch* and *porch* were given as allowable rhymes — as they are, and *must* be, with all of similar family, — wrote in the margin that they were "most impossible," and proposed to substitute the following —

"A Serjeant of the Law, wary and wise,
Whose robes had often brushed Paul's Paradise,"
etc.

Passing over the glaring paraphrase, as there is not one word of the second line in Chaucer, the ear that would not admit *arch* and *porch*, can yet give *paradise* and *wise*, not perceiving that the *s* in the latter word is pronounced as *z* — not *wice*, but *wize* — and takes rank with the allowable rhymes, like all of that class, as well as that of the “*arch*” and “*porch*.”

Before closing this section the reader may be interested to learn that my first acquaintance with the genial, hospitable, and ever-kindly Robert Bell (author of “*A History of Russia*,” editor of the “*Annotated Edition of the English Poets*,” and for many years editor of the “*Home News*”), was made through Leigh Hunt, with a view to his co-operation in “*Chaucer Modernized*.” All the contributors, previously named, were highly qualified for the undertaking, and all labored at it with minute care and thoughtful skill. Yet in consequence of the principle proposed by the editor, and accepted by all, the contest no less than the labor of love entailed upon

the editor by the philological enthusiasts, and sincere as well as learned admirers of the Father of English Poetry, far exceeded, in the converse sense, his most sanguine expectations. Whatever alterations were suggested, queries made, or comparison of the texts of different editions proposed, the majority of them were fought out by letters, or marginal and foot notes all over the proofs. Some of these proofs have been given, and may be considered curiosities of literature. Even when a proposed, or suggested alteration, if only of a single word, was finally accepted, it was seldom without a preliminary contest showing the admirable earnestness of the great poet's translators — but nevertheless trying for the unfortunate one who felt it his duty to tempt his fate on all due, or doubtful, occasions. As a further illustration, here are a few scraps taken from a single note by Robert Bell, who modernized Chaucer's poem of "The Complaint of Mars and Venus."

"MY DEAR HORNE, — I send you both

proofs. My reason for asking for a clean proof was to avoid the danger of confusing the printers by the numerous marks and references. . . . I have adopted the greater part of your alterations. Wherever I have differed from you, it is upon mature consideration and after a due balancing of arguments on both sides. Your 'sunrise,' in v. 1, although close to the 'sun uprist,' is not (I think), on the whole, so close a reflection of his meaning as my own line, in which the word 'upland' gives us the picture complete. Besides, 'sun' comes immediately after. In verse 7, I stand up for 'voluptuous joys.' Pray let it remain. In verse 8, 'loving compact' is not so close to the original 'steven,' which literally means an appointment, or 'assignation;' besides, assignation is familiar. But if, on consideration, you prefer the *compact*, you have my assent to its adoption. . . . Verse 17: 'Corse' means, in one sense, body—but in another, 'course,' which is, in my opinion, obviously the meaning here. *Avoiding* the light by baffling turns, creeping

and running in the shade, is in all respects better, in my opinion. I should be sorry to lose this. . . .

"Verse 22: *Make* is not intended for 'being.' By examining the other passages in which the singing bird uses it, you will find it means *mate*. I am tolerably certain that my translation is correct, and I think it more poetical.

'This is no feigned matter that I tell,
My lady is the very spring and well
Of beauty, gentleness, and liberty:
Her rich array, a costly *miracle*,' etc.

Mars, v. 3. .

"Oh! leave the 'miracle,' v. 5. I must plead also for the restoration of the original line, v. 9. I have brought in the morn in Chaucer's own words. Thanks for calling my attention to this. *L'Envoye*: You are right about 'Granson' [not grandson]. I am sorry you do not print the stanzas with the indented lines. I have restored a full spelling in those cases where the final syllable is not pronounced. I am afraid I have given you a

world of trouble, but I have saved you as much as I could in my proof, which is now completely ready to be printed. Mrs. B. read your 'Reve's Tale,' and is decidedly of opinion that there is no objection to it. . . . I must see you soon to settle about the next volume. Ever yours,

"R. B."

And all this, with much more omitted, after Bell had set out with the pleasing but too delusive amenity, that he "had adopted" the greater part of the proposed alterations.

At this period Robert Bell was living in a fine old-fashioned house, with a large garden, some six miles out of London, and gave a cordial standing invitation to his friends to dine there on Sundays. The most frequent guests, that is, once every month or two, were Thackeray, Samuel Lover, Laman Blanchard, Douglas Jerrold, Dr. Mayo, Felix Mendelssohn (when in London), Frank Stone, "Father Prout," and several artists and authors whose names I do not remember;

occasionally also, William and Mary Howitt, Dion Boucicault, Dr. Southwood Smith, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs. Jameson.

"Are you a writer of 'moods'?" said Bell one day to Thackeray. "Yes, assuredly," was the answer; "and often not in the best moods." "Then, sometimes you can't write at all?" "Of course not; or not fit to be read." "That's strange," said Bell. "Now, I can take out my watch—lay it down upon the table—and write, within a line or two, the same quantity in the same given time."

Thackeray was a frequent visitor at the old garden-mansion when Bell lived there, and would go on pleasantly for hours, talking and making sketches in an album. Some of these were richly humorous, and accompanied by scraps of prose or verse. This was before Thackeray had published "Vanity Fair," which at once raised him to his well-deserved eminence. He himself has related how this masterpiece of modern novel-writing was refused in the first instance, both by magazines

and as a substantive work ; but it was reserved for Mr. Charles Kent's "Footprints on the Road" to make it more recently known that he had also offered himself as an artist, to furnish sketches as illustrations for a popular author's stories, which had been very promptly declined. Bell used to take the utmost delight in seeing him make these fanciful sketches. The drawing-room was very large, and in winter there was a great log-fire. It chanced on a certain evening that the lamp suddenly went out, so that the back part of the room was thrown into shadow ; and there stood those huge figures — one upwards of six feet two, and bulky in proportion, — the other (Bell) being at least six feet four, stalwart and gaunt — with the large log-fire at steady red heat in front of them, and their great shoulders and backs in dark shade. It suggested to the imagination a scene of giants in a forest, holding high conference, or of the meeting between the Chancellor, "tower-heavy Turketul," and "Gorm" the Scandinavian sea-king, in the fine Chronicle play of "Athel-

stan." What a pity that Bell's amiable, and not unfrequently "inspired" visitor, Mendelssohn, did not chance to be at the pianoforte that evening! He would certainly have improvised some wonderful symphony on the occasion.



III.

"A NEW SPIRIT OF THE AGE."

The Anonymous — "A New Spirit of the Age" projected — Critiques chiefly by Miss Barrett, Robert Bell, and myself — Landor and Napoleon I. — Miss Barrett's Opinion of Landor's Works — W. J. Fox, M.P. — The Authoress of "Our Village" — Flush's Portrait — Miss Barrett's Autobiographical Notes — Her First Epic — Her Published Works — Loss and Recovery of Flush — Henry Fothergill Chorley — Alarms at Discovery — Mr. Reade — Mr. Merry — Critique on Tennyson — The Cockney School — Leigh Hunt's Religious Feeling and supposed Change of Principle — Shelley's Atheism — National Churches — Miss Barrett's alleged Imitations of Tennyson — Miss Mitford's Idiosyncrasies — Miss Barrett's Poetical Aspirations — Poetry as an Art — Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton) — John Sterling — Agnes Strickland — Mrs. Ellis (Stickney) — Mrs. Trollope — G. P. R. James — Banim — Bulwer Lytton — Dickens — The Hon. Mrs. Norton — Mrs. S. C. Hall — Barry Cornwall — Mr. Chorley and the Syncretic Society — Chaucer and the Uni-

ties of Time—Dickens and Victor Hugo contrasted—Critique on Miss Barrett—Caroline Southey—Serjeant Talfourd—Mrs. S. C. Hall—Samuel Lover—Charles Lever—The Influence and Popularity of "Harry Lorrequer"—Mr. Buxton Forman's Analysis of Sir Henry Taylor's "Philip van Artevelde"—Miss Barrett's Criticism of the Same Poem—"Festus"—The Locutorship of the Holy Ghost—Criticisms on "A New Spirit of the Age"—Landon's Epigram on Napoleon I.—Carlyle's "French Revolution," and "Past and Present"—Wordsworth and Little Things—Critiques on Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt—Lord Houghton's Monologue on Leigh Hunt.

To be anonymous is to be safe, and the pseudonymous is almost equally so, even if the individual be pretty clearly known in either case; but the moment an author gives his name openly to a free examination of living men and their doings, he walks into circling fields of battle, abounding in martello towers, ambuscades, and secret rifle-pits, the marksmen in which will sometimes bequeath a weapon to their sons and their surviving friends. That this is so, the experience of all those who have placed themselves in such

a position attests; but why it should be so, while the anonymous critic always remains unassailed, even when his identity is ascertained, would take too much time to discuss. We may simply assume that the offending opinions being apparently impersonal, the wound to the offended parties is less painful to human self-love. In all cases, however, the critic is bound to adopt the best means in his power to be right, and take his chance for all that may follow.

To any author or editor, about to publish a book in which there will inevitably be many things affecting contemporaries, the most valuable friend and counsellor he can have will be one who, possessing a finely suitable intellect for the matter in question, and having gathered together the requisite knowledge, is dwelling comparatively out of the world and its conflicting people and opinions, yet taking a deep interest in the best things that are going on, coupled with a due indignation at the worst, and who has magnanimity to admire, as well as moral courage to demur or

denounce, ever holding within, as at a shrine, an unmixed love and spirit of truth. Such a friend and counsellor, on a certain occasion, I had in Miss Barrett.

Soon after the completion of "Chaucer Modernized," two volumes of literary criticism, under the title of "A New Spirit of the Age," were projected. As in the former case, the work was to be edited and partly written by myself, and the principal and most valuable of my coadjutors was Miss Barrett. As the second edition of the book has been out of print for thirty years in England (though I am aware that at least three "unauthorized" editions were subsequently printed in America), and the authorship, whether single-handed or combined, of the various critiques, has never hitherto been divulged—the editor agreeing to "stand fire" for every thing—I think the "key," which I can supply, may not be without considerable literary interest. I may now say, for instance, that the critique entitled "William Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt" (two authors and men of the most unlike kind being pur-

posely contrasted, in order to bring out their great merits, with some few defects in each, the more forcibly from juxtaposition) was written in about equal proportions by Miss Barrett and myself. This was done at first in separate manuscripts, and then each interpolated the work of the other "as the spirit moved." It was written in letters, now and then of considerable length.

I believe I am making public for the first time the fact that the mottoes, which are singularly happy and appropriate, were for the most part supplied by Miss Barrett and Robert Browning, then unknown to each other. What could be better for Tennyson than the line from Carlyle? —

"Touches there are, be the heavens ever thanked, of
new Sphere melody."

Or more delicately suggestive of ironical approval than the lines chosen for Sir Henry Taylor, from Akenside —

"Hand in hand at Wisdom's shrine,
Beauty with Truth I strive to join,

And grave Assent with glad Applause
To paint the story of the soul,
And Plato's vision to control
By Verulamian laws!"

And these from Donne (Elegy A) —

"But as we, in our isle imprisoned,
Where cattle only, and divers dogs are bred,
The precious unicorns, strange monsters call, —
So thought he sweets strange, that had none at all."

Or more strikingly characteristic for the
author of "Lays of Ancient Rome" than

"Arma, virumque cano" —

or these on Landor —

"Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng."

Milton.

"Let his page,
Which charms the chosen Spirits of the Age,
Fold itself up for a serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation."

Shelley.

The review of the writings of Walter
Savage Landor (certainly one of the best

in the book) was mainly written by Miss Barrett. It was forwarded in two letters, which were carefully transcribed. What she had done was preceded by a few biographical and other remarks, founded upon communications forwarded to me by Mr. Landor. The spirit of a Greek epigram written by him on Napoleon the First, will be understood by the following interesting episode in the author's private history : —

XXII.

“ Mr. Landor went to Paris in the beginning of the century, where he witnessed the ceremony of Napoleon being made Consul for life, amidst the acclamations of multitudes. He subsequently saw the dethroned and deserted Emperor pass through Tours, on his way to embark, as he intended, for America. Napoleon was attended only by a single servant, and descended at the Prefecture, unrecognized by anybody except Landor. The people of Tours were most hostile to Napoleon ; as a republican politician, Landor had always

felt a hatred towards him, and now he had but to point one finger at him, and it would have done what all the artillery and 'infernal machines' of twenty years of wars and passions had failed to do. The people would have torn him to pieces. Need it be said that Landor was too 'good a hater,' and too noble a man to avail himself of such an opportunity. He held his breath, and let the hero pass. Perhaps after all there was no need of any of this hatred on the part of Landor, who, in common with many other excessively self-willed men, was as much exasperated at Napoleon's commanding successes, as at his falling off from pure republican principles. Howbeit, Landor's great hatred, and yet 'greater' forbearance, are hereby recorded."¹

Miss Barrett's letter proceeded thus : —

"In the case of Mr. Landor, however, other causes than the originality of his fac-

¹ "A New Spirit of the Age," vol. I., pp. 161-2; second edition, 1844.

ultly opposed his favor with the public. He has the most select audience, perhaps—the fittest, the fewest—of any distinguished author of the day; and this of his choice. 'Give me,' he said in one of his prefaces, 'ten accomplished men for readers, and I am content.'¹ And the event does not by any means, so far as we could desire, outstrip the modesty, or despair, or disdain, of this aspiration.

"He writes criticism for critics, and poetry for poets; his drama, when he is dramatic, will suppose neither pit nor gallery, nor critics, nor laws. He is not a publican among poets—he does not sell his Amreeta cups upon the highway. He delivers them rather with the dignity of a giver to ticketed persons; analyzing their flavor and fragrance with a learned delicacy, and an appeal to the esoteric. His very spelling of English is uncommon and theoretic; and as if poetry

¹ In reply to an adverse criticism in a certain quarterly journal, he offered the critic "three hot penny rolls" for his luncheon, if he could write any thing as good. This was not exactly the way to make friends with the tribe.

were not, in English, a sufficiently unpopular dead language, he has had recourse to writing poetry in Latin; with dissertations on the Latin tongue, to fence it out doubly from the populace. *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.*

"Mr. Landor is classical in the highest sense. His conceptions stand out clearly cut and fine, in a magnitude and nobility as far as possible removed from the small and sickly vagueness common to this century of letters. If he seems obscure at times it is from no infirmity or inadequacy of thought or word, but from extreme concentration and involution in brevity; for a short string can be tied in a knot as well as a long one. He can be tender, as the strong can best be; and his pathos, when it comes, is profound. His descriptions are full and startling; his thoughts self-produced and bold; and he has the art of taking a common-place under a new aspect, and of leaving the Roman brick in marble. In marble, indeed, he seems to work; for there is an angularity in the workmanship, whether of prose or verse, which

the very exquisiteness of the polish renders more conspicuous. You may complain, too, of hearing the chisel; but after all you applaud the work—it is a work well done. The elaboration produces no sense of heaviness; the severity of the outline does not militate against beauty; if it is cold, it is also noble; if not impulsive, it is suggestive. As a writer of Latin poems he ranks with our most successful scholars and poets; having less harmony and majesty than Milton had—when he aspired to that species of ‘Life in Death’—but more variety and freedom of utterance. Mr. Landor’s English prose writings possess most of the characteristics of his poetry, only they are more perfect in their class. His ‘Pericles and Aspasia’ and ‘Pentameron’ are books for the world and for all time, whenever the world and time shall come to their senses about them; complete in beauty of sentiment and subtlety of criticism. His general style is highly scholastic and elegant; his sentences have *articulations*, if such an expression may be permitted, of very

excellent proportions. And, abounding in striking images and thoughts, he is remarkable for making clear ground there, and for lifting them, like statues to pedestals, where they may be seen most distinctly, and strike with the most enduring, though often the most gradual, impression. This is the case both in his prose works and his poetry. It is more conspicuously true of some of his smaller poems, which for quiet classic grace and tenderness, and exquisite care in their polish, may best be compared with beautiful cameos and vases of the antique."

Two of Landor's works are probably known to less than half a dozen people of the present day. One is entitled "Poems from the Arabic and Persian." They are as full of ornate fancy, grace, and tenderness, as the originals from which they appeared to be translated, and were accompanied by a number of erudite critical notes, likely to cause much searching among Oriental scholars. And the search, after all, was certain to be in vain, as no such

poems really existed in the Arabic or Persian. The other *brochure* was "A Satire upon Satirists," a scathing piece of heroic verse — a copy of which Mr. Landor sent to me.

The following letters form an amusing contrast to the preceding, and are valuable as illustrations of the "lighter moods" that relieved the tedium of Miss Barrett's enforced seclusion: —

XXIII.

[No date.]

"Ah, my dear Mr. Horne, you will conclude — (for you may conclude, though I can not!) you will conclude from certain facts that I am very like a *broom*! — not Lord Brougham, who only does a *little* of every thing; — and not a wheeled brougham, which will stop when it is bidden; — and not a new broom, which sweeps clean and then has done with it; but that bewitched broom in the story, which, being sent to draw water, drew bucket after bucket, until the whole house was in a flood. Montaigne says somewhere that to stop gracefully is a sure proof of high race in a horse.

I wonder what not to stop at all is proof of—in horse, man, or woman? After all, I am not improving my case by this additional loquacity; and the case is bad enough, perhaps—viz., that you asked me to write four or five pages for your work, and that I have written what you see! Well, take the sheets—I make you a present of them to cut into pieces,—abbreviate in any possible way, or put into the fire altogether, should your judgment suggest that stronger measure. Indeed, I did not mean to write so much—I didn't think of writing your whole book for you!

"Oh, of course! You are free to interpolate as well as to cut down. In fact the papers are as much yours as if you had written them; and I sign over my personality in them to you herewith. Would it were better worth the haying!

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B."

XXIV.

"October 2, 1843. Friday.

"Thank you, my dear Mr. Horne—I am

glad to be excused the political economy. Yet if I had done it, I had *done* it—and you would have probably had some exceedingly ‘original views’—something to make the economists stare wonderfully and think of a new era. Being out of my depth I should certainly be profound. You would have had to go to Mr. W. J. Fox to know what I meant, and Mr. Fox couldn’t have told you—for I should have had this in common with Jeremy Bentham that it would be necessary for somebody to translate me. Well!—you see what you have lost, in ‘my great large hand.’ Ah, but (as you said to me about the portrait) if you repent you can’t have it otherwise now. You have done for yourself—and I close with the proposition about Wordsworth and Hunt.

“In respect to Miss Mitford, you and I were talking collaterally, and should as soon have come together as parallel lines. You thought I was praying for the introduction of her portrait, whereas I never thought of the engravings, but of the literature,—my impression being that you meant to pass her

over 'in solemn silence,' as defunct. Since you mention her honorably, we are at one, — and I admit at once that her portrait being before the public in various degrees of likeness, any additional expense *on that head* would be superfluous. You mention her — and it is enough — and in mentioning you must not superannuate her. She is not very much above fifty — looking older than her actual age — and has a far better right to a place in the book, according to the principle of the book, than the Campbells, Rogers, Wordsworths, etc. As to the question you put to me, her 'Belford Regis' should probably take rank as her best work; it has most power and most character; and is somewhat less uniformly soft and green than 'Our Village' is. The 'Village,' however, is, by association, my favorite. If read by snatches, it comes on the mind as the summer air and the sweet hum of rural sounds would float upon the senses through an open window in the country, and leaves with you for the whole day a tradition of fragrance and dew. Both

works are composites of separate papers — and the only unity (except, indeed, that of place) is in the cordial and cheerful spirit of the writer. She is in fact a sort of prose Crabbe in the sun, but with more grace and less strength; and also with a more steadfast look upon scenic nature — never going higher than the earth to look for the beautiful, but always finding it as surely as if she went higher. She is 'matter-of-fact,' she says, which may be so, but then she idealizes matter of fact before she touches it, and thus her matter of fact is as beautiful as the matter of fantasy of other people. Who would not go and gather Lilies of the Valley with her from the Silchester woods? Indeed if the world were as she paints it, we should all choose to live out of doors, and nobody catch any cold! Her last work (except the prose in Finden) is 'Country Stories,' a sort of codicil to 'The Village' and 'Belford Regis,' and she did begin a novel, which I am afraid, from the long loiterings, will never be ended. Her 'Dramatic Scenes' you probably know, as

well as her Tragedies. In my own mind—and Mr. Kenyon agrees with me—she herself is better and stronger than any of her books; and her letters and conversation show more grasp of intellect and general power than would be inferable from her finished compositions. I do not know whether you are of our opinion. In her works, however, through all the beauty there is a clear vein of sense, and a quickness of observation which takes the character of a refined shrewdness. Do you not think so? And is she not besides most intensely a woman, and an English-woman? Very well! I will be good as I am fair—i.e., by courtesy. And I will be very courteous to your right honorable printers, who can't be at the trouble to turn over a leaf or read from any thing except large paper, and an inch of margin on each side! Very well, they shall have their will—although, to be sure, I have been in the habit of writing for the press on the ordinary long note paper, and on both sides the page, and never heard a printer's murmur. And thank you for your

praise. Always welcome, be sure. And for the trust you put in me.

"And so 'in confidence deep as the grave,'

"Ever yours,

"E. B. B.

"'How I do go on in the dark!' To be sure I do. The dark, you know, is my particular province—even *without* the political economy. *That* would have made me a Princess of Darkness. Surely, by the way, Mr. Chorley's book was after 1833. I never remember dates, but surely it was."

A very neat and characteristic pen-and-ink portion of little "Flush"—humorously made rather like herself—was placed at the opening of Miss Barrett's next letter, evidently written in reply to my request for some biographical facts to be made use of in the article on herself. Unfortunately they reached me too late to prevent some errors which crept in.

XXV.

"October 5th, 1849.

"Here I send you one of the 'Spirits of the Age,' strongly recommending it to a place on your frontispiece. It is Flush's portrait, I need scarcely say; and only fails of being an excellent substitute for mine through being more worthy than I can be counted.

"Ah, my dear Mr. Horne, your application made me smile—a little with pleasure and pride that you should think of 'illustrating' your book with my darkness, and a little with self-mockery at the idea of it. No, no, no,—to 'recline' for any set of publishers in the world, even for yours, surpasseth the vanity that is in me. You know Mrs. B—— told you that I was 'modest,' and neither you nor I would believe a word of it; and here is the first proof that either of us ever had of it—unless (which is my opinion) it prove to be an instinct of self-preservation instead. The last time I 'reclined' for my picture was for a miniature by Mrs. Carter, just before I left Devonshire; and I did it for love's sake and papa's. And yet, although she was so obli

ging as to paint a very pretty little girl with unexceptionable regularity of features, he was ungrateful enough to throw it down with a pshaw! and deny the likeness altogether. There is no portrait of me at all which is considered like — except one painted in my infancy, where I appear in the character of a fugitive angel, which papa swears by all his gods is very like me to this day, and which perhaps may be like — about the wings. In conclusion, you see, I both can't and won't send you a picture for such a purpose — it is a superfluity of negation! 'Won't,' would have done very well for a woman — now would it not? 'Beseech your grace' do not be angry with me. It seems to me an ultra-impossibility to send my portrait to a publisher for introduction to the public — and not even to please

'The great Orion sloping slowly to the west'

could I bring my mind to such a thing. It may be affectation — who knows? And yet really I think it is too impulsive, instinctive,

and single-thoughted to be affectation, even under that thickest of disguises which is assumed by our own motives before our own eyes.

"Since I am beginning to be philosophical we might as well pass suddenly to the 'Biographical Sketch.' So you think that I am in the habit of keeping biographical sketches in my table-drawer for the use of hypothetical editors? Alas!—

"Once, indeed, for one year, I kept a diary in detail and largely; and at the end of the twelve months was in such a crisis of self-disgust that there was nothing for me but to leave off the diary. Did you ever try the effect of a diary upon your own mind? It is curious, especially where elastic spirits and fancies are at work upon a fixity of character and situation. You see how it is. I have no biographical sketch, and perhaps if I had—— My dear Mr. Horne, the public do not care for me enough to care at all for my biography. If you say any thing of me (and I am not affected enough to pretend to wish you to be absolutely

silent, if you see any occasion to speak), it must be as a writer of rhymes, and not as the heroine of a biography. You must not allow your kindness for me to place me in a promi- nency which I have to deserve — and do not yet deserve. And then as to stories, my story amounts to the knife-grinder's, with nothing at all for a catastrophe. A bird in a cage would have as good a story. Most of my events, and nearly all my intense pleasures, have passed in my *thoughts*. I wrote verses — as I dare say many have done who never wrote any poems — very early; at eight years old and earlier. But, what is less common, the early fancy turned into a will, and remained with me, and from that day to this, poetry has been a distinct object with me — an object to read, think, and live for. And I could make you laugh, although you could not make the public laugh, by the narrative of nascent odes, epics, and didactics crying aloud on obsolete Muses from childish lips. The Greeks were my demi-gods, and haunted me out of Pope's Homer until I dreamt more of Agamemnon

than of Moses the black pony. And thus my great 'epic' of eleven or twelve years old, in four books, and called 'The Battle of Marathon,' and of which fifty copies were printed because papa was bent upon spoiling me — is Pope's Homer done over again, or rather undone; for, although a curious production for a child, it gives evidence only of an imitative faculty and an ear, and a good deal of reading in a peculiar direction. The love of Pope's Homer threw me into Pope on one side and into Greek on the other, and into Latin as a help to Greek — and the influence of all these tendencies is manifest so long afterwards as in my 'Essay on Mind,' a didactic poem written when I was seventeen or eighteen, and long repented of as worthy of all repentance. The poem is imitative in its form, yet is not without traces of an individual thinking and feeling — the bird pecks through the shell in it. With this it has a pertness and pedantry which did not even then belong to the character of the author, and which I regret now more than I do the literary defectiveness.

"All this time, and indeed the greater part of my life, we lived at Hope End, a few miles from Malvern, in a retirement scarcely broken to me except by books and my own thoughts, and it is a beautiful country, and was a retirement happy in many ways, although the very peace of it troubles the heart as it looks back. There I had my fits of Pope, and Byron, and Coleridge, and read Greek as hard under the trees as some of your Oxonians in the Bodleian; gathered visions from Plato and the dramatists, and ate and drank Greek and made my head ache with it. Do you know the Malvern Hills? The hills of Piers Plowman's Visions? They seem to me my native hills; for, although I was born in the county of Durham, I was an infant when I went first into their neighborhood, and lived there until I had passed twenty by several years. Beautiful, beautiful hills, they are! And yet, not for the whole world's beauty, would I stand in the sunshine and the shadow of them any more. It would be a mockery, like the taking back of a broken flower to its stalk.

From thence we went to Sidmouth for two years; and I published there my translation of Æschylus, which was written in twelve days, and should have been thrown into the fire afterwards, — the only means of giving it a little warmth. The next removal was to London, and brought us close to *you* — did it not? To 74, Gloucester Place, when you were at 75 — was it not? I was unaware of it, however, until papa had purchased this house, and we were dwellers here. And then came the failure in my health, which never had been strong (at fifteen I nearly died), and the publication of 'The Seraphim,' the only work I care to acknowledge, and then the enforced exile to Torquay, with prophecy in the fear and grief and reluctance of it — a dreadful dream of an exile, which gave a nightmare to my life for ever, and robbed it of more than I can speak of here; do not speak of that anywhere. *Do not speak of that*, dear Mr. Horne; and for the rest, you see that there is nothing to say. It is 'a blank, my lord.' Yet I could write an auto-

biography, but not now, and not for an indifferent public; of whom, by the way, I never did and do not complain, seeing that they received my 'Seraphim' with some kindness, and that every thing published previously by me I reject myself, and cast upon the ground as unworthy. The 'Seraphim' has faults enough — and weaknesses, besides — but my voice is in it, in its individual tones, and not inarticulately.

"Writing, writing, writing I am, yet writing nothing which you ask for. Here at least are the dates of the three books: 'Essay on Mind, and other poems,' 1826; 'Prometheus, and other poems,' 1835; 'The Seraphim, and other poems,' 1838. My wish, my private wish, is that you should say nothing of the two first books, or sweep them cursorily with the most extreme feather of your wing. The first book especially, consisting of poems from the age of thirteen (of which are several of the smaller ones), and didactic pedantry of almost as absolute an immaturity, certainly has a claim to escape from public criticism.

Its circulation has been very limited of its own accord, and my will has contracted it further; for I would as soon circulate a caricature or lampoon on myself as that essay. And, for the 'Prometheus,' all the remaining copies are safely locked up in the wardrobe of papa's bedroom, entombed as safely as *CEdipus* among the olives. A few of the fugitive poems connected with that translation may be worth a little, perhaps; but they have not so much goodness as to overcome the badness of the blasphemy of *Æschylus*.

"Yes, I have recovered my pet. No, I have 'idealized' none of the dog-stealing. I had no time. I was crying while he was away, and I was accused so loudly of 'silliness' and 'childishness' afterwards, that I was glad to dry my eyes, and forget my misfortunes by way of rescuing my reputation. After all, it was excusable that I cried. Flushie is my friend—my companion—and loves me better than he loves the sunshine without. Oh, and if you had seen him, when he came home and threw himself into my

arms, palpitating with joy—in that dumb inarticulate ecstasy which is so affecting—love without speech! ‘You had better give your dog something to eat,’ said the thief to my brother when he yielded up his prize for a bribe, ‘for he has tasted nothing since he has been with us.’ *And he had been with them for three days*, and yet his heart was so full when he came home that he could not eat, but shrank away from the plate and laid down his head on my shoulder. The spirit of love conquered the animal appetite even in that dog. He is worth loving. Is he not?

“I shall keep this letter in the hope of seeing Mr. Kenyon and asking about Macaulay. You are very right in admiring Macaulay, who has a noble, clear, metallic note in his soul, and makes us ready by it for battle. I very much admire Mr. Macaulay, and could scarcely read his ballads and keep lying down. They seemed to draw me up to my feet as the mesmeric powers are said to do. I do not, however, think that Mr. Kenyon knows him as intimately as you fancy—

although to be sure Mr. Kenyon knows everybody, more or less.

"And now I put an end to this letter (though you would scarcely suppose it) and wish you all success, prosperity, and laurels in your new field. I thought you had vanished from every field, and that I was likely not to find you higher up than Hades. But being found, may you be successful. You walk in honorable steps, following Hazlitt, and the work is likely to be popular. Are you aware that Mr. Chorley published a work called the 'Authors and Authoresses of England,' some time ago, with profiles and short notices? When I say some time ago, I mean some years. And your book will probably assume a higher character, and go deeper.

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"Mr. Kenyon I have seen, and ascertained that he does not know Macaulay in any degree, less or more."

XXVI. "Eleven o'Clock, A.M., Wednesday.
[Postmark — Nov. 1st, 1843.]

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I write in all the hurry of blots in reply to your note 'by express,' this morning to assure you solemnly that if Mr. Reade really meant to tell you that he was aware of my having touched your work with my little finger, he must have had it from especial revelation of angels.¹ I solemnly assure you that I never mentioned the subject even to my own father, that I have never named 'The Spirit of the Age,' or any thing bearing a relation to it, even to Miss Mitford, lest the very suggestion of a surmise should be made or repeated. *You* are in the wrong, be sure, my dear Mr. Horne. Thus it must have been: that Mr. Reade heard from Miss Mitford, and intended to express to *you*, that I was to be

¹ Mr. John Edmund Reade, a voluminous but unread writer of verse, who, if still living, is about as old as the present century. His principal works are "Cain, the Wanderer," 1830; "Italy," 1838; "Catiline," a drama, and "The Deluge," a drama, 1839; "The Vision of the Ancient Kings," and "Life's Episode," 1843; "Memnon," 1844; "The Revelations of Life," 1849; and "Man in Paradise," 1856; "Laureate Wreath," 1863; and editions of his poetical works in 1850, 1860, and 1865. — S.

mentioned in the book, and that you mistook his meaning for that of my hand being employed in it. Miss Mitford knew I was to be in it, because she wrote to tell me of the book, with some kind expressions of congratulation that now she should have my picture, etc. To which I replied (the only word I ever said on the subject at all) that you had indeed been good enough to propose it, but that I had declined the honor and crown of the portrait, by an instinct of what was *undue* to me. Now do you see? I know nothing of Mr. Reade; and if I did, I have *mentioned the subject to nobody* — not to Miss Mitford — not to Mr. Kenyon. I am innocent, — stand with washed hands before you. In fact, I am the person to be vexed, and I am vexed thoroughly. Oh! will this be in time to *suppress* your notes of explanation? Try to explain away the explanation. I quite see that I ought not to be named in connection with this book, and for several other than the obvious reasons I *object* to being named. It is a service of danger to write in the book, and I, who

am a woman, am not made for war. Do what you can to get me out of this scrape. In reply to your letter of yesterday, I will do any thing you think me fit for — on conditions of strict secrecy. But how is it to be kept now? I am quite vexed — and yesterday I was pleased by your letter. Mr. Reade! Who would ever have suspected *him* of having special revelations?

"Ever yours,

"E. B. B.

"Are you sure that you said nothing yourself to Miss Mitford? If you did, it is explained."

XXVII.

"November 3d, 1843.

"I do not hear from you, and am wondering why and how. I am not easy about this Mr. Reade and his secret informations, and at your believing for one moment that I was faithless enough to be capable of sinning against a confidence reposed in me. The absolute impossibility of his speaking to the

end you understood, with any grounds for so speaking (unless you yourself gave the tenure of them to him or others), I wish I could make as plain to you as it is to me. It is absolutely impossible. I said to Flush, 'Only *you* could betray me. Are *you* the traitor?' And he looked at me with dilated earnest steady eyes, and then kissed both my hands — as if to assure me of truth and fealty. So as Flush didn't tell, nobody else from this room did. Once, with my living voice, have I named your book, and that was to Mr. Kenyon, when I tried to get the information for you about Macaulay; and *once*, in my correspondence, to Miss Mitford, after she made the observation I told you of in my last note, and to the simple effect I told you. By the way, I hope you could read the last note. I was so vexed and so hurried as I wrote it. And I hope you believed in my absolute innocence as you read it, from the very hurry and vexation, of which the traces must at least have been natural.

"Yesterday I had a letter from Miss Mit

ford, and I opened it trembling, lest I should read something more of Mr. Reade's informations. No, not a word. I think I must be right in my suggestion that you mistook what he meant to refer to — and that he meant to refer to me — written about rather than writing. Or else (which has occurred to me since) he may have mistaken some expression of Miss Mitford's (i.e., understood by it what she did not mean to express) about my being *in* the work, and have fallen upon the truth so, by accident. Anyway I am very sorry that you should have sent him explanations by express, because, you see, Mr. Reade has the habit of repeating other people's sayings, *beginning with their poetry*, and he is not likely to stop for us. Besides, men always *do* talk, don't they? They can't keep a secret, can they? That is my remark.

"I had a letter from Mr. Mathews, of New York, yesterday, with a cancelling of the dishonor of the editor of 'Graham's,' in consequence of which he (Mr. Mathews) says that he has smoothed his brows and sent to that

magazine the copy of 'Orion' which I send for the purpose. He does not, however, say a word about my other proposition. Probably he has not had time, since the quarrel, to enter into another treaty; and I am not myself quite so anxious about it, fearing to draw you into a scrape. Mr. Mathews is delighted with 'Orion,' and is going to send you soon some poems of his own, as homage from the West. He desires me to make known generally that a Copyright Club, for the protection of authors poor and honest, is being established at New York, and that Mr. Bryant is president, and he, Mr. Mathews, secretary, and that we are all to be protected most effectually.

"Write and tell me that you believe me to be honest. Not 'honest, honest Iago,' but in a better sense. I am vexed for myself, vexed for you, and vexed, in a compound relation, for your thoughts of me. It is abominable for a person to be so discreet as I have been, and all in vain! There is no poetical nor any other kind of justice in it.

"As to Mr. Reade—but really I am too cross about him to speak of him.

"A gentleman with whom I am personally unacquainted, sent me a few days ago a little book which he had written upon 'predestination.' As you are fond of 'dogmas,' I will lend it to you. Yesterday I wrote to thank him, and referring to his note for the address, I read *Highlands*. Immediately I began to rage and roar in the spirit about Mr. Reade, which was very improper, considering that I had just been writing controversy upon predestination.

"Mr. Merry, by the way, is a man of excellent intuitions, and I have a high esteem for him. Also, I once before had some correspondence with him on the subject of another little work from his hand, called 'A Happy Futurity;' but then it was long ago, and I had quite forgotten since that he lived at *Highlands*.

"Yours faithfully, dear Mr. Horne, and by no means faithlessly

"E. B. B."

In a previous letter Miss Barrett agreed to my proposal that she should write the paper on "William Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt;" consequently the first draft of the paper on them was written by her, and she forwarded it to me in letters. These I interpolated throughout, sometimes at considerable length. A rough proof of this was then transmitted to Miss Barrett. Very speedily there came to me a letter containing objections and remonstrances with reference to some of my interpolated remarks concerning Leigh Hunt. As to Wordsworth we were fully agreed.

XXVIII.

"November, 1843, Monday.

"Thanks, many and true, my dear Mr. Horne, for the glance at the proofs. You shall find me what is called a 'safe person,' and worthy of confidence; and I am secretly proud of the confidence and the association, and of your condescending to think that we write pretty well together. Reading this paper has amused me beyond your guessing. I have not a copy of my MS. (an evidence of

the 'safety'); but I remember nearly all the way, and am particularly amused to observe where, and in what octave, you strike your trumpet-note of accompaniment, and where you see fit to change the key, as choragus. Really the paper, altogether, reads well. And now to my criticism.

"I have been intrepid enough to make some slight alterations and corrections of the proof where there could be no doubt, I fancied, of the truth of my suggestion; — and in other places I have written down my query.

"I object to your addition to 'the cheek of the impartial historian' — of 'as of the true critics of present times.' There is confusion and pleonasm, and a division of the identity of impartial historians and true critics. Why not simply 'the cheek of the true critic of present times'? It may be one or the other, but shouldn't be both, I think.

"'Alfred Tennyson.' — It appears to me certain that Tennyson wrote long and long after the extinction — as a critical phrase — of 'the Cockney School.' And even if this

were not so, it appears to me doubtful whether Tennyson lived in London long enough to take class as a hypothetical cockney. His family have a country house somewhere in Kent; and civically he never did any more — did he? — than 'visit' London? *That* is my impression, at least.

"Below — I fancy that our 'two heads' [instead of being better than 'one,' as had been suggested] rather knock against each other, in the observation about the imaginations of Wordsworth and Hunt. The sentences straggle, and do not follow according to the laws of what Browne calls 'suggestion.' Look at them and see.

"'In exterior nature Wordsworth has a wider faith, *and* a less discriminating taste.' Why not 'or' instead of 'and'? It is correcter, I think.

"'In religious feeling, however, he [Leigh Hunt] may have been misrepresented:' —

"And, on the last page — 'They were provoked at his tendency to confound the distinctions of good and evil, by saying too much on the amiable side of the condemned.'

"Now, will you have patience with me, my dear Mr. Horne, while I speak a little on these two texts, and regret deeply that you should allow your friendship and admiration for Mr. Leigh Hunt to draw the question away from the truth to the extent of this inch? '*Amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas,*' is the noblest expression of friendship — surely — and the most acceptable even to Socrates. *You*, who are candid — tell me if it is true that he was 'misrepresented' in matters of religion.

"Is it true — strictly true — that he confounded the distinction of good and evil *only* by saying too much and too amiably 'for the condemned'? Does it not stand clear out in his books, in his early writings, that he confounded good and evil, in *principles* rather than by *persons*? If you deny this, you may become a partial historian — but is the *fact* altered, before the eyes of your own friendship? — that fact being so undeniable that the poet himself has taken advantage of the opportunity of a later edition, in order to

obliterate and change the offensive passages.¹

"That great injustice has been done to Mr. Leigh Hunt, I am well aware, — that what was reprobated in him passed free in others, I am well aware. But one sort of injustice is not to be corrected by *another*, and on the point of what his views of religious truth and moral virtue used to be, I can not agree with you that he has been 'misrepresented;' and I am of opinion that you confront the offensive injustice of the world with the defensive injustice of your individual friendship.

"For myself, I will say that, out of the circle of Mr. Leigh Hunt's immediate friends, there can not be one who regards him with more respect and admiration than I do. Yet I must write so.

"Also, it seems to me clear — you have been guilty of some (and that no small degree of) 'offensive' injustice to the great fathers

¹ I do not consider that Leigh Hunt ever obliterated or changed any part of his early writings, *in principle*, but only omitted or softened the same in expression.

of our poetry, Chaucer and Shakspeare, by accusing them of confounding, or seeming to confound, the bounds of good and evil, which they never did confound ; which, in all their universality of heart and intellect, and their boundless charity and sympathy with human nature, they never did confound — seeing that in this they were godlike, that they would not consent to lower from their starry height, to the level of *persons*, the *principles* of either verity or virtue.

“ Can you forgive me, my dear friend, for writing my whole thought out so freely? As we see truth, it becomes the duty of each of us to utter it, — and just in proportion to my high consideration for you — and, if you will permit me to say so, my true and grateful regard for you — was I pricked and provoked by your line of defense. The generous motive is obvious, and *therefore* I should like the defense to be *worthy of the motive*. Forgive me, at least, and — try if you can avoid charging our Chaucer and Shakspeare (in contrariousness to your own estimate of the

former, in the admirable preliminary Essay to the Modernization) of confounding, or seeming to confound, the bounds of good and evil.

"There now! You will never send me any more proof-sheets. Nay, who knows but that you will quarrel with me for life as a climax of vengeance!

"Forgive me generously, on the contrary. For I am faithfully your friend, so much the more,

"E. B. B.

"Is Mr. Hunt a voluminous writer? I should have taken quite a contrary view — but ignorantly, perhaps.

"Have I taken a note of my admiration of your estimate (in one respect) of Wordsworth, as *no-prophet*? It seems to me both subtle and true."

The gracious hand that wrote the foregoing controversial letter can no longer make a rejoinder. I therefore must do no more than plead guilty to having said, directly or by in-

ference, that Leigh Hunt's "boundless charity, and sympathy with human nature," *had* often led him to regard evil acts or conventional crimes in the same extenuating, if not pardoning, spirit that was frequently displayed by Chaucer and Shakspeare. But "to the pure, all things are pure," and while the fair controversialist was living, I could not then have quoted (and for the same reasons do not feel I can do it now) a variety of questionable and most unquestionable acts and scenes portrayed vividly by those great poets, which I sometimes "made fun of," and in other cases are "let off" very easily — if not with a smile (*aside*).

Here follows the second letter, mainly on the same subject, after my reply. It commences quite in her "winning way," but very often slants off into her usual vigorous style when excited.

XXIX.

"December, 1843, Wednesday.

"You are kind and generous, and I did you so much dishonor as really to be a little

uneasy lest you might be angry with me for what I said!

"After all, my dear Mr. Horne, the reference as it stood would have appeared to many readers, as to myself, directed to both theological and moral points; — inasmuch as the circumstance of your 'not knowing,' or dismissing from the observation of your soul, certain passages of former works of Hunt, will not alter the relations of them in the memory of other people. They can not but remember such things 'were' — and it would be painful to you to understand thoroughly how in some quarters, some recollections are 'at top' of the beauty and glory. Strictly in confidence [all three then living; — all three now dead], and to prove to you that all this is not a dream of mine, and how high certain influences can splash — I will name to you our dear friend, Miss Mitford — no prude — no fanatic — yet one who said or implied to me once, that a woman should not be eager to praise Leigh Hunt — or something to that effect. Now *I*, you know, am proud to be

eager to praise him—you know it as well as I.

"Still there *are* passages of his early works which strike both at morals and at religion—not in the person of anybody—not by a mistaken leniency (if any leniency can be mistaken) towards persons—nor at sectarianism or nice superfluities of dogma. Neither I nor you can deny these things; but the poet has done better by canceling them in new editions. You know Shelley, in the midst of the grand signatures of God, wrote at Chamouni—*ἀθεος*. Poor Shelley!—he lied against himself, as against the Creator. For 'every true poet,' says a true poet (and one so happy, as a thinker, as never to change his opinions!) has a religious passion in his soul.¹

"And I won't try to slay you with your sword. And I will believe readily and gladly upon your testimony that your friend—whom I should be proud to have for my friend—is a religious man, as he is a true poet. Of a

¹ This hit was meant for me. I may here say that Leigh Hunt had a religious passion in his soul.

devotional nature he could not choose but partake. I agree with you that the cordiality and benignity of his genius are essentially Christian. And may I say of myself that I hope there is nobody in the world with a stronger will and aspiration to escape from *sectarianism* in any sort or sense, when I have eyes to discern it,—and that the sectarianism of the National Churches, to which I do not belong, and of the Dissenting bodies, to which I do—stand together before me on a pretty just level of detestation? Truth (as far as each thinker can apprehend) apprehended—and love, comprehending—make my idea—my hope of a Church. But the Christianity of the world is apt to wander from Christ and the hope of Him.

"Where *I* am wandering, you will wonder. I wonder a little myself. I should be thanking you instead, perhaps, for this new sight of new printer's proofs, and all the pleasure they have given me. I like very much indeed your estimate of Landor;—laughed—as well as such wights as I can laugh—at your genius

of the drama with a cast-net, and at some other things — and clapped my hands mentally over sayings of more gravity. He, Landor, will be pleased, I think; and you have done your 'spiriting' excellently. Just as you tell me, I intrude my suggestions on the margin. I perceived on the other proof that you had not revised it, and I perceived in this, that you have done so but partially.

"I return the proof to-day, because I foresee that even if I detain it till to-morrow I shall not have time to write about Tennyson. So my words about him must follow instead of accompanying it.¹

"It will be delightful to me to praise Tennyson — although, by St. Eloy, I never imitated him; and I take that oath, because Mr. — thought I instructed my readers how to say 'ed' at his suggestion, and because the 'Quarterly' was of opinion that, if it hadn't been for him, I should have hung a lady's hair 'blackly' instead of '*very*'

¹ This refers to the article on Tennyson which was written by me, and sent in proof-sheets for Miss Barrett to interpolate.

blackly.' The 'very' melting of the heaven of criticism—a rank plagiarism!—only the verity of it is far from being plain to me, whatever may be the verisimilitude. But if the 'New Spirit of the Age' should say so too, by St. Eloy again, I will not reproach, reprove, or murmur. What a wandering, rolling stone I am to-day, to be sure! In good sooth, thinking over my letter of some days ago, and of the great tempest which appeared to me awaiting you in the form of the disappointed vanities of sundries,—it occurred to me that you would rationally infer the probability of my judging, in the matter, from my own proper consciousness of offensive self-love. Now I beg you not to infer so any more. I do not say, 'Tell the truth of me,' because of course you will tell it as you discern it. But I may promise you not to murmur, not to be angry, not to be vexed — ('methinks the lady doth protest too much') — by any unpleasant truth which is necessary for you to say. So, *nota bene*—when I talked of 'thunder, lightning, and of rain,' it

was not my thunder. You will have plenty, nevertheless.

"That will do for to-night, surely, in the way of mist. You shall have Tennyson [her interpolations] this week.

"Ever yours,

"E. B. B."

It is not only because the corporal presence of Miss Barrett, Leigh Hunt, and Miss Mitford has passed away that I consider myself at liberty to divulge a name mentioned to me, in the second paragraph of this letter, thirty years ago; but because what was said can no longer be any source of annoyance or unpleasantness to the relatives and friends of the party most concerned (Miss Mitford), and also because it was so sincerely her opinion that I am sure she would feel no objection to have it recorded.

I have described Miss Mitford as a lady of the "old school;" and I may now add that she had a horror of modern French romances, and most of the fashionable English novelists

into the bargain. They were not to be compared to Miss Ferrier, Miss Austen, Miss Edgeworth, and Mrs. Inchbald. Nor *are* they in many respects — always excepting some of the great writers, such as George Sand and Victor Hugo. But Miss Mitford shook her head even at those writers. True, she was of large sympathies intellectually, and "no prude," but she shrank from the mere mention of the names of Fourier and Robert Owen, and in fact from every writer who seemed to be undermining the existing condition of society in its religious and moral conventionalities, its habits, customs, and manners. Moreover, she was a "country lady," and if she caught any author growing a snowdrop and crocus at the wrong time of the year, he never recovered a place in her memory. On a certain occasion she had been speaking of the rabbit-shooting at Bear Wood; and afterwards happening to propose a visit there, I inadvertently remarked that I should be very happy to accompany her, but that of late years I had taken to

gymnastic exercises, and quite given up all field sports — besides, "I didn't care for rabbit-shooting." It was the wrong season! — and the look and exclamation that followed, showed me that I had lost something of my position in her mind for ever. It says much for a local literary reputation "in the country" when a lady living in a cottage — a real cottage — almost covered with roses, jessamine, honeysuckle, and an apricot-tree spreading all over the south wall — who, giving an evening party, with no "spread" whatever, beyond tea and coffee and a prodigality of strawberries, shall yet have had a line of private carriages waiting outside, astonishing the little hedges of the highway and green lanes for nearly half a mile, and bringing the *élite* of the county families for miles all round. What could such a hostess feel and think of any writers who seemed to be "flying in the face" of all this elegance, respectability, and landed property, not to speak of clerical magistrates, and the narrow white ties and cut-away waistcoats of accomplished curates from every little spire in the vicinity!

A most excellent person was Mary Russell Mitford, but she did not understand or know Leigh Hunt — and she certainly did not wish to do either. Her estimate of Dickens was not much more complimentary. She could not admire his love of "low life;" yet she did not perceive that a genuine country clod-pole of Berkshire or elsewhere was about as low a type of man as could well be found, such as makes one think that Darwin's theory need by no means require millions — or even many thousands — of years.

XXX.

"Monday Morning.

[Date probably about 1843.]

"I answer your note before you can answer mine, and it is the best so. Whatever may be said or unsaid of me and mine in your work [alluding to the forthcoming 'New Spirit of the Age'], do not give a second thought to any imagination of discontent as applicable to me. I shall know that you meant the kindest — and understand *awry* every thing not the pleasantest. My Lead will not go round.

"For the rest, or rather under the whole, if I myself am not *tame* about the 'Seraphim,' it is because I am the person interested. I wonder to myself sometimes, in a climax of dissatisfaction, how I came to publish it. It is a failure in my own eyes; and if it were not for the poems of less pretension in its company, would have fallen, both probably and deservedly, a dead weight from the press.

"Something I shall do hereafter in poetry, I hope. Hopes which have fallen dead from all things, are thrown in a heap *there* — perhaps like withered leaves! We must hope in something however, if we live.

"Which I did not mean to say in beginning this note.

"Only you will see that I shall not be discontented at the effects of your comments, etc.; it is better too, perhaps, so. The book [the critical work in preparation] will be in better odor for it, with the million.

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"I heard from Miss Mitford this morning. She appears resolved to go to Jersey, as you know probably."

"Saturday.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I send you 'an opinion' on Tennyson. Use it, or do not use it. He is a divine poet; but I have found it difficult (in the examination of my own thoughts of him) to analyze his divinity, and to determine (even to myself) his particular aspect as a writer. What is the reason of it? It never struck me before. A true and divine poet nevertheless.

"Have you a portrait of him? I hope so.

"Yours,

"E. B. B."

Miss Mitford considered that music should have been cultivated by me rather than poetry, except only so far as dramatic literature was concerned; and she often threw out very pointed hints to that effect, as may be gathered from the opening of the following letter: —

XXXI.

"December 13th, 1843.

"Thank you, my dear Mr. Horne. Your note amused me extremely. And I am very glad, since you excite me to disinterested virtue by seeming to expect it, that you have a month's more 'leave' for the book. It was certainly most hard upon you to be pressed into press by such thumbscrewing. But the two volumes were resolved on long ago, were they not? Miss Mitford told me of them a month since.

"As to music and poetry, I know perfectly well how it was—although I asked you the question. 'Orion' is something more than playing on an instrument; it is composition in the manner of Beethoven, who was a poet if ever there was one. What you say of comparisons has truth in it. And yet do you not know that the metaphysicians declare the impossibility of discovering any object, or even straight line, *without two colors?* And the analogy is favorable to the use of comparisons; moreover, Plutarch and Mr. Horne have had frequent recourse to them.

"But there is another reason why poetry should not be compared with the other arts, i.e., because poetry contains them all. Is this not true? And then for a poet to prefer being a musician (even in the great composing sense) is an in consequence of reason as well as an ingratitude of genius which I never seriously attributed to you, although somebody made affidavit to me that it was so in fact; and that you didn't care much about poetry after all — not you! And you, the poet of 'Orion'! It was monstrous on the face of it. Only if people will play like Orpheus, other people's ideas of them will be apt to grow bewildered in the running under-wood — entangled in the branches — lost in the shadows. And I think I have heard that you compose as well as play on harp, lute, sackbut, dulcimer, and all manner of instruments.

"Mr. Reade — his dagger!

"After all, I am not a 'good hater.' Have not, I do assure you (and you may think the worse of me for it, perhaps!), a

single personal animosity in the world; and also I am tolerably good-tempered, — that is, I never threw the chairs about the room in a passion since I was eleven years old. Therefore, altogether, it is easy for me to comprehend that your friend, albeit a foe of mine, is one of the most amiable and cultivated men in the world; and to pardon him heartily for my having displeased him. 'Liberté, égalité, ou la mort!' We may each think as we like of each other's poetry, and no harm done to either. My objection, however, to certain volumes, is not so much that they are Mr. Reade's, as that *they are not his*.

"I am so glad that you have Tennyson's portrait. Do you know that he is not at all in good health just now? I heard it the other day with great regret.

"Do you want 'an opinion' upon Monckton Milnes? or have you had enough of me? I admired his first volume very much; but his later poetry seems to want fire and imagination, and to strain too much at the didactic. His poetry for the people is poetry for the

sages — deficient, it strikes me, in all popular qualities. And then that exquisite 'Lay of the Humble' which I was praising lately, and which affected me much at the time I read it (it appeared in the first volume), somebody told me the other day that it was not original. Taken from the German I think they said it was. I wish I knew. It is very beautiful in any case.

" 'Blackwood' gave a paper — a review — once, between Mr. Milnes and me, and I was very proud of the association.

" Faithfully your privy councillor,

" E. B. B."

XXXII.

" Dec. 22d, 1843.

" Just ten minutes before your note came, I held Monckton Milnes's volumes in my hands — the two first, at least — having be-
thought me of taking an opportunity of borrowing them from Mr. Kenyon. So now, if you please, I will make a few notes on them, which you will 'improve' (literally) to the edification of your readers afterwards. And

in the mean time — I am very patient, you know, but in the mean time I should like to hear what you want me to do, and what this great subject to come is. I confess to being moderately curious about it. ‘Not Dr. Pusey.’ Thank you for the ‘*not*.’ And not a political economist, I hope — not a mathematician, nor a man of science — such a one as Babbage, for instance, to undo me. My dear Mr. Horne, certainly I am a little beset with business just now, being on the verge of getting another volume into print, — with one or two long poems struggling for completion at my hands, in order to a subsequent falling upon the printer’s. But if there should be nothing likely to take much time, in the work you meditate for me, I shall be very happy, at present and always, to be of use to you, or trying to do it, — which, as I say it honestly, I hope you will act as if you believed. Thank you much for the promise of proofs, and you will tell me what the new subject is? Not that I am impatient. Oh, no!

“And so you heard of ‘Tennyson and Mr.

Sterling.' Well! there is no accounting for tastes, as we say with proverbial wisdom; and, what is quite as certain, there is no accounting for want of taste. Mr. Sterling is admired by some, I am aware, and I would rather that you had your impressions of him from reading his book, uncolored by hearing what I say. He was a contributor to 'Blackwood;' and some two or three years ago, published his contributed poems in an independent form, — just as Mr. Simmons has done. By the way, there are persons who think highly of Mr. Simmons, — for instance, Miss Mitford does, praising him for terseness and vigor. To return to Mr. Sterling, I never read his book, although I have read many of his poems in 'Blackwood.' He falls, to my appreciation, into the class of respectable poets; good sense and good feeling, somewhat dry and cold, and very level, smooth writing being what I discern in him. There are Mr. Sterling, Mr. Simmons, Lord Leigh, and one or two others, who have education and natural ability enough to be any thing in the world, *except* poets, and

who choose to be poets 'in spite of nature and their stars,' to say nothing of gods, men, and critical columns. Moreover, all these writers, by a curious consistency, take up and use the Gallic-Drydeny conception of versification, — so, at least, the passing glances I have had of their proceedings lead me to suppose. Now, you will judge for yourself, dear Mr. Horne, and I shall not be uneasy lest you should fall into prejudices in consequence of my hasty impressions."

XXXIII.

"Dec. 23d, 1843.

"I forgot, after all. Agnes Strickland is the author of the 'Memoirs of the Queens of England,' by which she is principally known. She did, however, write before — tales, I think — perhaps a novel; but, although one of the very best read persons of your acquaintance, in all manner of romances and novels, — good, bad, and indifferent, — I do feel rather in a mist about her doings in these respects, only having a faint idea that I have looked through a volume or two of hers, and

that I found them of the highly moral, didactic, and useful-knowledge-society description. But do not trust me an inch, for I feel in a mist, and in a sort of fear of confounding the maiden didactication of Mrs. Ellis when she was Sarah Stickney, and this of Miss Strickland's, — having been given to confound Stickneys and Stricklands from the very beginning. One or two volumes of the 'Memoirs of the Queens of England' I have read; and they seemed to me to show industry and good taste in the selection and compilation of materials. But I did not read any more, just because I like the old Chronicles, and dislike the compiling spirit. Miss Lawrence, you are aware, has published *Memoirs of the Queens* also, — and, moreover, the two ladies have stood at cocked-pistol in relation to one another, because of this coincidence of subject. I have not seen Miss Lawrence's work, but, from indications of extracts, I do more than suspect that she is the deeper-minded woman of the two, and qualified to take, in literature, the higher place.

“By the way, either a Stickney or a Strickland wrote ‘The Poetry of Life,’ — prose (very) essays, which I couldn’t get to the end of — full of words, and signifying nothing.

“I confess that I wondered a good deal at Mr. Buckingham’s, or the Literary Institute’s, selection of Miss Strickland as the second female Honorary Member. Nobody else to be found fit for the honor, except Miss Strickland! And Miss Martineau, Mrs. Jameson, Maria Edgeworth, Mary Howitt, and Lady Morgan all alive — with long-established European reputations! France and Germany will be a little astonished, I think; and, for my own part, although it gave me cordial pleasure to hear of the honor won by, and honorably paid to, Miss Mitford, I should have been more pleased, even for her sake, and valued the appreciation more fully, if it had united her name to the names of these distinguished contemporaries, rather than severed it from them.

“Truly yours,

“E. B. B.”

XXXIV.

"January 5th, 1844,

"Friday Night and Saturday Morning.

"My majesty was astounded at the impromptu of a chapter on the novelists, sent by electricity to Windsor. A pile of 'commands' took fire, and was consumed on the spot. It is a very clever paper. Tell me who wrote it — in a very small whisper. You tell me always to write on the margin, and I suppose I take for granted that you wish it, and have other proofs for use. Otherwise I should never, I think, go on blotting so impudently the length and breadth of my opinionativeness.

"And, my dear Mr. Horne, it really does strike me strongly that you and your critic do no manner of justice to Mrs. Trollope, who is a very clever writer — very acute — absolute over laughter in matters of caricature on the coarse scale, and moreover — which scarcely accords with her general character as either you or I consider it — a vivid and graphic painter of scenic nature. Because I said this illegibly somewhere in the proof I say it over

again here. I am determined that you shall read me. Also, Mrs. Gore's *wit* should be specially mentioned. She is 'almost feminine,' tell your critic, in the flashing of her wit. Also Mr. James is praised far too much, to my mind. Also, such a writer as Banim, a true genius, should have been mentioned in the body of your article. You might have done it in a paragraph. Also, there is another omission which I shall never end talking of, if it prove to be actually an omission. Do you mean calmly, advisedly, and with your eyes open, to have a chapter on the novelists, and omit Bulwer? Or do you (which would be a satisfactory explanation) give him a room to himself? But if so, why not refer to him in this paper as a leader in the highest class of the art, to be mentioned hereafter? Think of 'Ernest Maltravers,' and 'Alice,' worth all the historical novels—I was near saying that ever were written! You, a poet and dramatist, to forget the passionate unity of that great work! for the two romances complete the single work. And

then, even if you succeed in lifting the historical romance over the head of all other kinds of romance (a position which I protest solemnly and vociferously against — as untenable and unworthy of a poet's editorship), by that very sign, Sir Lytton Bulwer takes throne rank in his 'Pompeii' and 'Rienzi,' while Mr. James lies under the footstool. Not that I would dishonor Mr. James. He is a picturesque writer, and paints his canvas-deep figures in bright costume, and in the midst of excellent landscape. Often when I have been very unwell, I have been able to read his books with advantage, when I could not read better ones. You may read him from end to end without a superfluous beat of the heart, — and they are just the sort of intellectual diet fitted for persons 'ordered to be kept quiet' by their physicians. Do not mistake, I am writing quite gravely, and not, I hope, ungratefully. I am grateful to Mr. James for many a still serene hour. I have every respect for him as a sensible level writer — a very agreeable writer — pure-minded.

and with talents in his own province. But to give him place as a romance writer over Bulwer, the prose poet of the day, and over Banim, the prose-dramatist, is, must be, a monstrous exaggeration of his actual claim. Besides, this measuring of novelists' merits by their 'regular issue' strikes me as a false step in itself. Such is my protestation.

“Tell me, did you ever read ‘Ernest Maltravers,’ with its sequence of ‘Alice’? I suspect *nay*, or you would not in your editorship be so patient. It appears to me that you cultivate scorn for the novel-readers, or else have no comprehension for them, dividing them into classes of Godwin-readers, Fielding-readers, Richardson-readers, James-readers, and so forth. You have no sympathy for persons who, when they were children, beset everybody in the house, from the proprietor to the second housemaid, to ‘tell them a story;’ and retain so much of their childhood — green as grass — as that love of stories. If a reader reads Smollett for the literature, I can quite comprehend how the same reader could not

read Richardson, and *a fortiori* how James would be an insipid sort of *caviare* to him. But when the taste for fiction is a thing distinct from the taste for literature, the very same persons may seize upon the story of a hundred story-tellers, and love, for the sake of it, the 'makings' of even inferior hands. Oh, that love for story-telling! It may be foolish, to be sure; it leads one into waste of time and strong excitements, to be sure; still, how pleasant it is! How full of enchantment and dreamtime gladnesses! What a pleasant accompaniment to one's lonely coffee-cup in the morning or evening, to hold a little volume in the left hand and read softly along how Lindoro saw Monimia over the hedge, and what he said to her! After breakfast we have other matters to do — grave 'business matters,' poems to write upon Eden, or essays on Carlyle, or literature in various shapes to be employed seriously on. But everybody must attend to a certain proportion of practical affairs of life, and Lindoro and Monimia bring us ours. And then, if Monimia behaves

pretty well, what rational satisfaction we have in settling her at the end of the book! No woman who speculates and practices 'on her own account' has half the satisfaction in securing an establishment that we have with our Monimias, nor *should* have, let it be said boldly. Did we not divine it would end so — albeit ourselves and Monimia were weeping together at the end of the second volume? Even to the middle of the third, when Lindoro was sworn at for a traitor by everybody in the book, may it not be testified gloriously of *us* that *we* saw through him, and relied implicitly upon an exculpating fidelity which should be 'in' at the *finis*, to glorify him finally? What, have you known nothing, Mr. Editor, of these exaltations? Indeed your note looks like it. I could almost fancy you hadn't, by this talk of 'taste, taste,' and of readers turned to St. Leon who never could read any thing else. The *love of fiction*, as such, escapes you wholly. I could almost fancy that you never felt inclined even to commit justifiable homicide on an individual who, having read the book you are

reading, and beholding you with tears in your eyes over the thickest of the sorrows of it, should venture to inform you that Monimia will get over it all in the second volume. But indeed this is scarcely credible. Here I am writing as if neither you nor I had any thing to do in the 'varsal world.' Forgive me, or try.

"And mind you don't show the proof with my pertnesses on it to your critic. Trusting to you, I never care for what I write, but let it go to you as it comes to me.

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B."

There must have been some misinformation or misunderstanding with regard to the accusation of a breach of confidence made in the following letter:—

XXXV.

"January 8th, 1844.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE,—I begin to believe in the force of my own incantations, which is certainly half-way to witchhood. Yes, the writer's analysis is warm with feeling

and sympathy — and I am very glad of it. Is it not true that such romances as Bulwer's are of a far higher class than the historical novel? I think so — I am sure of it.

"When I took breath after my long letter the other day, I began to remember (too late), that not a word had been said, on either side, of Dickens. Only your remembering and esteeming Dickens was sure, — and I had it in my head, by some occult means, that you were inclined to forget Bulwer on purpose. I have known depreciators of Bulwer — a friend of ours being one. He is called 'false' and 'unhealthy' by a certain school of critics and readers, in whose eyes all intensity wears the aspect of extravagance.

"And now, without being extravagant, I am about to be intensely angry with you — and to illustrate my own critical views. This morning I received a letter from Mr. Merry, of Stonefield, with whom I do not regularly correspond, but who insisted, against my will, on my writing about his book on 'predestination,' and when I did so, blanched off himself

into a collateral commentary on the English liturgy, in relation to certain supposed views of mine. I send you a leaf of his letter, the body of which refers to theological matters; and you may thus judge, by your own eyes and judgment, how surprised I was to read what he says of Mr. Reade—you may judge yourself what the evidence is of Mr. Horne's high treason. You are the *only person* to whom I ever spoke or hinted one word in reference to the supposed opinion of me. If I wrote as I did to you—it was wrong of me, perhaps—but it was written in absolute confidence, and with the faith that you wouldn't expose all my nonsense to the third person immediately concerned. Perhaps after all this was expecting more of you than I had had sense enough to do for myself,—but you will be just enough to testify that I never *complained* (as I had no reason) of any opinion attributed, by conjecture or otherwise, to Mr. Reade or others, on the subject of my writings. There is plenty of fault in them, as nobody knows better than myself:

and even if there were no fault, I should be the last in the world to complain of a free opinion in its full expression, because I was the object of its condemnation. If I mentioned it at all to you, it was incidentally — and *I never have* mentioned it to another — *never*, not even to Miss Mitford. And as to Mr. Merry, Mr. Reade's name never before has occurred between us two.

“‘Et tu, Brute!’ — oh — to go and betray me before the ides of March!

“It was written, you see, that we should quarrel a little about Mr. Reade — who certainly ‘knows more than he should do’ by questionable means — albeit not a witch. Perhaps you made a portable packet of some of my letters, and sent them to amuse his leisure withal, or ‘read them into the air.’ with intention! Which would account for the ‘caustic touches’ by return of post.

“I shall write to Mr. Merry, and beg him to assure Mr. Reade that I never considered myself in the slightest degree aggrieved by any opinion of his, of whatever nature I

might have supposed that opinion to be. I shall treat the subject in a general way and without mentioning *you*. That Mr. Reade is worthy of every respect, and too amiable a man to give pain, or think or speak harshness of any individual, I have always believed and continue to believe of him, and shall add the expression of that belief to the rest.

" 'Something too much of this.' I hope I may have appeared in a sufficient passion in the course of my letter.

" Truly yours,

" E. B. B."

What the presentation volume was that the next letter acknowledges, I have not the remotest recollection, nor do I remember what occasioned the gift, unless, indeed, as Miss Barrett had rendered me so much literary assistance, and I could not venture to offer her any recompense of the ordinary kind, it may have been that something was substituted which I thought she would have no objection to accept.

XXXVI.

"Monday.

[Postmark — Jan. 30th, 1844.]

"I could almost quarrel with you, and be sure of being right withal, in defiance of prophecy (if I had the heart), for sending me this far too expensive present. How could you do so, my dear Mr. Horne? It is a splendid book. What visions of beauty! There is a spirit in the leaves. But the spirit of the kindness is the over-mastering one.

"I think, from a far remembrance, that Mrs. Norton's first poem was called 'The Undying One.' Her chief poem, that is, the principal one in her last volume, is 'The Dream.' Have you read these, to be of opinion still, as said the 'Quarterly,' that she is a modification of Byron? The only poems which could have suggested such a likeness are the personal ones, I fancy; and they, with some intensity and much pathos, are very unlike Byron, I must hold. 'Less vindictive!' — ah, Mr. Horne, do *you* too call Byron vindictive? *I* do not. If he turned upon the dart, it was by the instinct of passion, not by the theory

of vengeance, I believe and am assured Poor, poor Lord Byron! Now would I lay the sun and moon against a tennis-ball that he had more tenderness in one section of his heart than * * * * has in all hers, though a tenderness misunderstood and crushed, ignorantly, profanely, and vilely, by false friends and a pattern wife. His blood is on our heads — on us in England — even as [the First] Napoleon's is! Two stains of the sort have we in one century; and what will wash them out?

"There is a poem, much shorter than the first, and yet longer than the mere lyrics (in 'The Dream, and other Poems'), the title of which I forget, with a domestic subject, and written in stanzas, which has, to my apprehension, more power than any other composition of Mrs. Norton's. Some of her songs for music are very lovely; and her lyrics of more *body* have the qualities of sweetness and pathos to a touching and thrilling degree. 'The Dream' you may like better than I do. The personal references in the miscellaneous poems go deep and true, and are as tenderly

written as ink mixed with tears can write any thing. My wager of the sun and moon intended no depreciation of this tenderness.

"Find out the domestic poem, which is not, by the way, a personal poem. It will strike you, I think; and our critics may say that it is 'almost masculine' in characteristic power. You should remember, moreover, that she composes music, published with her own words. Also, did she not edit at one time either the 'Court Journal' or the 'Belle Assemblée'? And she has contributed prose tales full of color and expression to various annuals.

"My earnest request to you is *not* to take for granted any thing I say; but to look into the poems yourself. Mary Howitt's ballads are nearer and dearer to *me*, and suggestive of a far higher species of poetical power, according to my view, than any volume I ever saw of Mrs. Norton's: and then you know how prejudices work, and I confess to you a little disinclination . . . which may vibrate, in spite of me, through my estimate of Mrs. Norton's writings. Now, mind, I do not say

it is so, but that it *may be so*; and I put you on your guard *lest* it be so. She has the face of an angel, and the tongue of a wit; but tender and pitiful to woman, as a woman should be, she is not; and for this I can not easily pardon her. I do not speak out of personal experience.

"With thanks once again, believe me,

"Truly yours,

"E. B. B."

I did not fail to communicate to Miss Barrett that I accepted her admission as to "how prejudices work," and with especial reference to the injured lady in question. As usual, there was a postscript, with something good in it.

"I should have forgotten Mrs. S. C. Hall, too, only just as I was writing to you, came a note from her to me with some proposition about a new magazine—a lady's magazine! So I bethought me of naming her to you—and you *must* make room for her."

Our next letter refers to two celebrities of

that day who deserve to be equally celebrated now, though I fear that is not the case.

.XXXVII. "Wednesday — [1844] Thursday, rather.

[Written after midnight, I suppose.]

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — The poem which I called 'domestic' is one, I think, in an octave stanza containing a story — the history of a wife who becomes aware of the dishonor of her husband. It succeeds 'The Dream.' It has more power than any composition of Mrs. Norton's which I have read. The name quite escapes me; and I have so painful an association of a personal nature with the book, as to lose all courage to look into it. There are domestic poems also, which refer to herself personally — and to the pictures of her children — sweet and tender.

"In respect to Barry Cornwall, I am delighted to hear that you admit him; and the first omission was probably accidental, or from reasons of time and haste. His lyrical poems are most exquisite, — like an embodied music. In the melodies of words he is learned, and

in the causes of tears not uninstructed. His dramatic fragments are not masculine ; — but *Ford* was not masculine — when he wrote alone. They seem to me to have dramatic intonations, moving, if not deep. His fault is only felt in a continuous reading, when we become aware of a certain sameness — a one-tonedness, which is not the tone of a trumpet. It is a more effeminate instrument. In my own private opinion, Barry Cornwall has done a good deal, with all his genius, and perhaps as a consequence of his genius, to emasculate the poetry of the passing age. To talk of 'fair things' when he had to speak of women, and of 'laughing flowers' when his business was with a full-blown daisy [dame, or dairy-maid] is the fashion of his school. His care has not been to use the most expressive, but the prettiest word. His Muse has held her Pandemonium too much in the cavity of his ear. Still, that this arises from a too exquisite sense of beauty as a *means* as well as an object, is evident ; and for all sweet and exquisitely pathetic lyric qualities, we need not go farther than to Barry Cornwall.

"In this last republication, I miss (it may be there, but running the book through hastily, I can not find it) what used to thrill me through and through with the charm of lyric cadence and matchless pathos. I admired it so, that I used the stanza in that slight poem of my own, called 'Loved once,' — only *reversing* it in every second verse. But the time ran in my head : —

'Must it be? Then, farewell!
Thou, whom my woman's heart has loved too long,
Farewell — and be this song
The last in which I say, I loved thee well.'

It begins so, I remember, and the whole lyric is most moving. I wish I had it to send you.

"You know his 'Marcian Colonna,' and others perhaps which I do not know. I admire Barry Cornwall much.

"Mr. Moxon was good enough to send me yesterday Mr. Patmore's poems. I had not time to cut the leaves, when Miss Mitford came, and I gave her the first-fruits of the book. Between you and me — 'dreadfully

private' — this would have been more generous of me, if I had not by a few glances nearly satisfied myself that he is *not* a Tennyson, and never could have been. Also, he is not to be reproached with Barry Cornwall's fault of over-effluence in music. Still, I have no right to judge — for the leaves are uncut.

"I heard of your meeting Mr. Chorley in Miss Mitford's presence. It never struck her what a meeting of thunder-clouds it might be — until I made the suggestion.

"I shall do my book the honor of placing your name in it, and prove that we are not under different banners, — and that

"I am,

"Ever faithfully and gratefully yours,

"E. B. B.

"I must thank you (having forgotten it before) for your criticism about 'the many miles.' Certainly I made out by the loose expression that Eve had traveled many miles in one day — which might have been? though I wish I had the power of altering it."

I do not think Miss Barrett does adequate justice to Barry Cornwall (Mr. Procter) as a *dramatist*. His tragedy of "Mirandola" (finely produced by Macready, who personated the principal part) is one among various marked instances that must occur to all who are conversant with the dramatic literature of the last five and thirty years, — that the "decline," as its disgusting *fall* before "burlesque" is softly termed, is certainly not attributable to the want of dramatists of genius. Of the foregoing critique by Miss Barrett, no portion was inserted in the "New Spirit of the Age," as the intended paper was crowded out, but reserved for a projected third volume, which, however, never was written. The remark on a possible "meeting of thunder-clouds," alludes to a somewhat painful, and at any rate an awkward and ridiculous scene. The late Mr. Henry Chorley, an accomplished gentleman, of fine and delicate tastes, was writing critiques in the "Athenæum," and elsewhere, during the time that the Syncretic Society (mainly composed

of un-acted dramatists and dramatic performers) was in "full flourish;" and he often attacked them, and was fond of employing the epithet of "feeble." Extravagant they often no doubt were, and boastful, and now and then absurd in their sanguine views of rapidly reviving the British Drama, even to the Elizabethan height; but they meant well, their cause was good, they were full of energy and faith, and for the most part were certainly not "feeble." It chanced at this time that I had written a sort of Christmas book for children, called "The London Doll," and in one of the chapters somebody says, — I forget who, perhaps the "Doll," — "It was a moment of that terrible kind, as the poet Henry Chorley says, —

'When all that's feeble squeaks within the soul!'"

A copy of this little book had been sent by me to Mary Howitt. Mr. Henry Chorley chanced to call upon her a morning or so afterwards, and Mary Howitt, with the innocence of a child of seven years old, placed

the book in his hand, as she was leaving the room to attend to some domestic matter, calling his attention to the (assumed) quotation from "the poet, Henry Chorley," as something complimentary that would please him. When she returned, "the poet" was staring down at the open book! "Why," said he, "look here, Mrs. Howitt!" — but the scene is too ridiculous to pursue. With regard to the "number of miles" that Miss Barrett made Eve journey during a single night, I had written to ask if she intended Eve to have had wings, or to have been assisted by winged spirits, because Eve as a human being could not have got over the distance indicated, in the exhausted state of her feelings. But the poem being printed, I tried to soften the vexation by directing the attention of the poetess to a similar oversight made by Chaucer, not as to distance, but the progress of time. In the "Knichte's Tale," we find Palamon and Arcite taken prisoners — say, at about the age of twenty-five. They are shut up in a tower, and "thus passeth year by year," —

say, four or five years; and then they both catch sight of Emelie. After this we hear of several events, each occupying "a year or two." Then we are told that Palamon has suffered "*love* and distress," during seven years since he set eyes on Emelie. Meanwhile Emelie also speaks of "full many a year." After the death of Arcite, we hear of "by processe and by length of certain years" — say, three or four more. I think it will be found that fourteen or fifteen years must have elapsed since the two young knights were taken prisoners; so that when Palamon marries Emelie, she can not be less than thirty-five, nor he less than forty. This continuity may be admired, for its earnestness and intensity of purpose; but I much doubt if Chaucer directly intended so many years to elapse.

The article upon Charles Dickens was written entirely by myself, and Miss Barrett had never seen any portion of it until the work was published. The following letter contains some comments of a kind which I think no

one else has ever made — that is, as matter of public criticism.

XXXVIII. "Tuesday, February 20, 1844.

"I quite forgot to say to you, my dear Mr. Horne, what I think is your only omission of importance in your admirable critical essay upon Charles Dickens. It is the influence upon his mind, most manifest and undeniable, of the French school of imaginative literature. When people talk of Fielding and Smollett as being ideals and models before him, elected by his own judgment, — they (and even *you*) omit what consciously or unconsciously, 'in the body or out of the body, I can not say,' Victor Hugo has been to him. Did you ever read the powerful, the wonderfully powerful 'Trois Jours d'un Condamné' — and will you (if you have read it) confront your recollections of it with most of the tragic saliences of 'Oliver Twist' — the scenes about the Jew Fagin, his trial scene and ctherwise? Since, two or three years ago, I went regularly through all the romances of the gifted French-

man, my admiration for our countryman has paled down paler and paler. The fact is, that we have no such romance-writer as Victor Hugo, — let us be as anti-Gallic as we please. And anti-Gallicism is the merest affectation at this hour of the day, upon which all the burning-glasses of French genius appear to be concentrated. The indelicacy and want of elemental morality make another side of the question: but the *genius* is just as undeniable to me, as the sun would be in Italy. George Sand, for instance, is the greatest female genius the world ever saw — [at this period, George Eliot had not appeared] — at least, since Sappho, who broke off a fragment of her soul to be guessed by — as creation did by its fossils. And George Sand, it is remarkable, precisely like her prototype, has suffered her senses to leaven her soul — to permeate it through and through, and make a sensual soul of it. She is a wonderful woman, and, I hope, rising into a purer atmosphere by the very strength of her wing. And then, Balzac — Eugene Sue — even the

Soulies, and the grade lower — we can not *wish* them to be popular in England, for obvious reasons, but it is melancholy to look round and see no such bloom of intellectual glory on our own literature, in shutting our doors against theirs.

"I send you a letter, received this morning from America, because there is as much about you in it as about me.

"A Mr. W——, a New York bookseller, brought a letter of introduction to me some ten days ago, — and when I was forced to decline seeing him, wrote to introduce himself to me 'paternally,' as being the first bearer of my poetry into the new world. It was this gentleman who begged me to send him some account of my 'cousin Mr. Tennyson;' — Leigh Hunt having intimated somewhere that he was my cousin. [He said this figuratively.] So as *you* give me grand-paternal advice sometimes, see what a number of distinguished relations I have — inclusive of the New York bookseller!

"I send you this letter of Mr. Mathews, a

little for him as well as for you; and would entreat you — you who have the power — to use any just influence within your power, in order to procure him the critical courtesy he looks for among us. I have explained once to him, but I fear he does not understand, how *I* can do nothing at all — and that if I were to presume a step, upon the circumstance of my accidental connection with the 'Athenæum,' Mr. Dilke would very properly laugh me to scorn for my pains. In the case of my own book, I shall let it float down the stream as other books. I never did otherwise, and never shall. You know, the very act of offering a civility to some editors is considered in the light of offering a bribe to a judge — and, in fact, it should *not* be done, as well as could not be done. Still, I am embarrassed, because I see plainly that Mr. Mathews thinks I can do something — the 'something' being out of my power. The 'Athenæum' reviewed his poem 'On Man' the other day, and in admitting the ability, dwelt in a way likely to be offensive on the

want of 'grace' — and I was very sorry, quite impotently. Well, if you have it in your power to help his works, and can do so honestly, — or if any friend of yours within your influence can do so honestly, you will, I am sure, remember Mr. Mathews. He has no ordinary degree of mental power, which is developing itself into light in America; and he is no imitator of English models — which is remarkable. Moreover, I believe him to be full of genial kindness and generosity, upright and warm-hearted, and so, for the best reasons, well worth serving.

"You have no time to hear me talk, and I have little time to talk in, — and therefore logically I am talkative this morning.

"Ever and truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"What I say of French literature *versus* our own of the day, refers of course to a particular department of it. The French have no rhythmic poetry, from a defect in the language: and their poetry finds issue in prose

while ours (thank God, and blessings on our 'pure well of English undefiled') flows in its right channel. We have no business to complain, therefore, that we have not a chorus of prose poets, such as the French boast of at this moment."

Victor Hugo's "Trois Jours d'un Condamné" I had read, and regarded as the most perfect thing of the kind ever put to paper. As with the writer, so with the reader — we are intensely and minutely identified with all the inmost anguish of thought and sensation, in every stage of the process through those harrowing three days and nights. And yet the treatment of that trial-scene of Fagin must be considered strikingly original, full of touches of genius; and the same must be said of several other tragic scenes in "Oliver Twist." That the natural bent of the genius of Charles Dickens was to what actors term *eccentric comedy*, and to broad farce, and richly humorous and often ridiculous caricatures, no doubt can exist; nevertheless, his

tragic scenes, in low life, and indeed the very lowest, are obviously his own, and founded upon an absolute knowledge of those classes he describes with so much perfection. That he had received some influences from the works of Victor Hugo is likely and natural enough; and I discovered in one of his books a yet more direct influence from one of the very earliest, if not the earliest (as well as the almost forgotten), novelists of America, viz., Brockden Brown — a writer of very peculiar genius and originality.

The next letter alludes to my critique on the poetry of Miss Barrett. I only said there precisely what I thought and felt about it, and have never entertained or given expression to any other opinion. The poetess believed in my sincerity; nevertheless it was a nice and delicate matter for her to write about, which however she gets through with the ease of any truthful person who believes in the truthfulness of another.

XXXIX.

"March 5, 1844.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — It has been haunting me all this morning, that you may be drawing the very last inference I should wish you to draw from my silence. But I have been so unwell that I could not even read; and the writing has been impossible; and people cry out even now, 'Why, surely you are not going to write!'

"I *must* write. It is on my mind — and must be off it.

"First to thank you for the books, which it was such unnecessary kindness for you to send, — and then, for the abundant kindness in another way which will, at the earliest thought, occur to you. My only objection to the paper is, that the personal kindness is too evident. My objection, you will see, leaves me full of gratitude to you; and fills to the brim that Venetian goblet of former obligations, which never held any poison.

"You are guilty of certain exaggerations, however, in speaking of me, against which I shall oppose my *dele* as you allow me. For

instance, I have not been 'shut up in one room for six or seven years,' — four or five would be nearer; and then, except on one occasion, I have not been for 'several weeks together in the dark' during the course of them. And then there is not a single 'elegant Latin verse' extant from my hand. I never cultivated Latin verses. And then (last and greatest) Miss Martineau's beautiful book ('Life in the Sick Room') was *not* dedicated to *me*, whatever may be said or thought of it. I know that a current report attributed the honor to me; but there was no whisper of truth in the report, and you must contradict it in the new edition.¹

"There is nothing to alter — that is, nothing to add — in relation to myself; but there are some inaccuracies, as I have explained to you, and not the least is in your opening allusion to the 'Quarterly Review' article. Why you should give that blow to poor Lady E—,

¹ I feel consoled for these errors by the fact that they show very clearly that no MS. or proof of the article about herself had been forwarded to her, — a "critical" courtesy not so common among literary friends as may be supposed.

I really can not conceive. She writes nonsense often, taking it for inspiration,—and her words carry away her thoughts, instead of *vice versa*; but the truth is that she has more imagination, more fire, more notion of what poetry *is*, than half the 'ladies' graciously affected by you. To raise Miss Lowe, for instance (who is an accomplished woman, and full of acquirement, I believe, but who certainly never wrote a line of poetry in her life), over the head of Lady E——, who has a faculty—who has imagination, only is in fault through letting it run to seed—is a very undeniable injustice to which I must call your attention. Also, Caroline Southey should have been mentioned with some distinction. She is a womanly Cowper, with much of his sweetness, and some of his strength, and there is much in her poems to which the heart of the reader leans back in remembrance. The real offense, done by that article in the 'Quarterly,' was the *classification*. As far as I am concerned at least, that was what I disliked. And probably Mrs. Norton and Caroline

Southey felt it still more dishonoring. Mrs. Brooke, the *Maria del Occidente*, has a faculty;—but for all the rest, Lady E——, the sacrificed 'lady of rank,' is well worth them all put together, — and *that* is not praise.

"But it is only astonishing that, in a work of this nature, you should not have made more slips, I am sure, than you have. How beautifully it is adorned — 'got up.' Guess which head I prefer? Southwood Smith's. The power, the serenity, and sweetness of the whole expression, have exceedingly impressed me. Is Tennyson's like? It is an intellectual head, but the eyes seem blanker than his should be, and the lips want delicacy.¹ Dickens has the dust and mud of humanity about him, notwithstanding those eagle eyes.

"And I have been so amused this morning, by the sight of a letter from your friend Mr. R——, which Miss Mitford sent me. He has seen, forsooth, your advertisement, with no name of his in it! — but he is too sure of his

¹ This portrait, from the painting by Samuel Laurence, was the first ever published of Tennyson. — Ed.

position with posterity to care for *that* now, — though once it would have saddened him. He is quite aware now that all the notices are written by personal friends of the parties! You have indeed got one true poet, he sees — 'in spite of his little *isms*' — (whom in the world can he mean? — has Wordsworth any little *isms*?) Yes, and another — the 'porcelain poet,' Tennyson, who, however, 'will never do any thing great and spirit-stirring,' like Mr. R——'s 'I——*' and the rest — which is a comfort. But that Leigh Hunt should ever be raised up to such a height, and that the author of 'I——*' should live 'to see it,' is quite astounding to him — only he is rather glad than otherwise of it, from motives of humanity — 'It may benefit him.' That Dickens, moreover, should be so 'elevated,' is another marvel — *he*, who is to pass away, with all his 'coarse caricatures,' in the period of a lifetime. Altogether, Mr. R—— feels precisely on the subject of this book 'as Molière did' when he observed disdainfully the successes of his contemporaries, who were to

be forgotten in twenty years. It is a sublime position.

"I can not resist telling you this — although you must lay it by directly among our secrets — because, you see, Miss Mitford sent me the letter, and *might* think that I oughtn't to say a word about it. But I can not resist the pleasure of communicating it to you. See what a 'pure aspiration' is! How pure — *how* noble! How free from 'envy, malice, and all uncharitableness'! I wouldn't have such an inward fretting of the heart-strings for a good deal more than the author of 'I——*'s' chances of posterity.

"Nothing is said of *me*, of course. And this is disdain, not toleration.

"And now I come to tell you, that, thanking you twenty times for the promise of your ay or nay, on the MS. question — I have reasonably determined *not* to trouble you with it. When I asked I did not think of second editions. Nay, perhaps I did not think enough of any thing. It was a request worthy, I doubt not, of the goddess of Un

reason — and I recall it — but thankfully, believe me.

"Yours with many sorts of gratitude,

"E. B. B.

"I have written myself *up* again with this letter. It does me good to write to you, you see, and there is not much essentially the matter, — I shall probably be quite right again to-morrow."

The reference to Robert Montgomery in the following letter should be explained. Soon after the "New Spirit of the Age" had appeared, in which was a trenchant critique on Montgomery for which I alone was responsible, — an amusing but what might have been a most unpleasant *contre-temps* occurred. Having accepted an invitation to dine with a friend, I arrived at his house early, and was shown into a room where a gentleman was sitting. With the door in his hand, my host said loudly, "Mr. Horne, Mr. Robert Montgomery;" and add-

ing a remark of a mischievous and cruelly embarrassing character, slammed the door, leaving us alone! Then, and through the whole course of the evening, Montgomery behaved so genially that we were both of us entirely at our ease. It should be remembered that in those days a man was called out for much less.

XL.

"June 9, 1844,

"Friday night, ten o'clock.

"Thank you, my dear friend, for your note, which has set me at ease. We are agreed, I hope, absolutely. It is 'better not to do too much to the article,' and it is still better not to do any thing.

"I write to-night with the especial desire of telling you that I think it not only possible, but probable, that you may dilate to your apprehension, with too extreme a sensitiveness, the depreciations of the world. It is an odd sort of world—not over kind and generous and grateful, and we need not expect too much from it. Still, we may take over-depressing views of it sometimes. For in

stance, you fancy that Mr. Serjeant Talfourd takes upon himself to be discontented with what you say of him. *I know to the contrary.* He was heard to say a very few days ago—speaking of poets or dramatists, I scarcely am sure of the definite subject—‘There is Horne, who is worth twenty of them! A true man of genius *he* is! But he has written a book called the “New Spirit of the Age,” which is likely, I fear, to do him a great deal of harm. I am quite satisfied with what he says of me in it—indeed he has said more than I had any reason to expect. But with other people it is different, and I hear a great many complaints.’

“Those were the very words (as far as I can recollect the words repeated to me, and so far as my informant was correct) used by Mr. Talfourd. He seemed to be perfectly satisfied personally, and if he was not, I must say he was an unreasonable man.

“As to Dickens, I have nothing to observe, except my own wonder. Only, as you have mistaken Talfourd’s words, you may have

mistaken his besides. 'A great many complaints' there will of course be. You have not always wadded your bludgeon, and you meant to give occasion for 'a great many complaints' in particular cases! And now we must admit that you have *not* quite crowned Bulwer up to his right. Bulwer is a man of genius, and your praise is cold. If I were Bulwer, I should *not* be satisfied; and as I am *not* Bulwer, I may say so.

"I am almost sorry at what you tell me about Robert Montgomery—sorry, in my sympathy for you. It is abashing to find a man morally noble whom, for whatever excellent reasons, we have been decrying intellectually. But *is* he morally noble? In the preface to his 'Luther,' in which he replies generally to the remarks of the critical press, the tone is of the ignoblest and worst. Audacious without dignity, violent without power, virulent without the strength of a sarcasm. Still, he may be better out of print. If I were you I should certainly, for the convenience of my own feelings, avoid the

intercourse. For the rest, I wish that article out of the book. I certainly do. I venture to fancy that it is (comparatively, and on the whole) a weak point, and better away from the point of sight.

"What do you mean by 'complaints' being 'hitherto on the safe side of friendship'? I do not understand. You do not mean that any thing which anybody could choose to say of your paper on me, that any possible and imaginable imaginary comment on it could affect the friendship which subsists between us? Why, if the paper itself had been as unkind as it is kind and cordial — even in such a case — my part of the said friendship could hardly have been affected, except by the natural pain. How kind you have been to me for years! Do I not remember it? Could I forget it? Try to keep up your spirits about the book. I really think (as I have told you already) that you fancy more harm than exists. Miss Mitford comes to town on Monday for a week — not to this house.

"Most truly yours,

"E. B. B."

Several persons of eminence, and a good many who held popular positions of merit, were omitted from the two volumes of the "New Spirit of the Age" for want of space, but with a settled intention of including them in a third volume. Circumstances caused this intended publication to be too long postponed, and it was finally abandoned. But in the mean time Miss Barrett, being full to overflowing of all the knowledge required, sent me various letters, of which good use was made, but only in the way of hints for summary remarks.

Here is one of them : —

XLI.

"Monday Morning.

[Postmark—Sept. 6th, 1844.]

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I am taking fright about the proofs, and begin to think it would be wiser to have no more of them, particularly as you are going out of town. I am secret as the first cousin of Harpocrates himself; but I was born without the faculty of what is called 'presence of mind,' — and an

accident might betray us. Therefore no proofs, while you are out of town, unless I can do any good in correcting.¹

"Certainly you must speak of Mrs. S. C. Hall, and you may do so kindly and justly at once. She has written one or two novels; but the performances she is better known by are her miscellaneous light essays and tales, with which the periodical literature of the day is sown abundantly, and characteristic sketches illustrative of her native Ireland, of which she published a volume not long ago, in conjunction with her husband. Mr. S. C. Hall edits books of gems and ballads, etc., up to monthly magazines. His wife was an intimate friend of poor 'L. E. L.,' which reminds me of a Mrs. Thomson who was an intimate friend of hers also, and who has a claim on you, both by the force of novels and of historical writing. To return to Mrs. S.

¹ The nervous apprehensions of any lady in delicate health, who is anxious to maintain her *incognito* when a coming storm is hanging in the air, are only in the natural order of things, and I guarded the secret of her literary assistance by every means in my power.

C. Hall, — her Irish tales (I am turning this pen round and round to find a writable side to it, and all in vain), her Irish tales have character and life, tenderness and softness — *not* power, and *not* passion — while her miscellaneous sketches in general are graceful and womanly, and the last in the most amiable sense.

"Lover you certainly should mention; and as to your 'five words,' you deserve to be impaled upon them yourself, if you give him no more. He is a powerful writer of Irish novels, and falls into the ranks after Banim, — with less passion than the latter, but more picturesque vivacity.

"You probably know his ballads, which have a certain singable beauty in them and a happy occasional fancifulness. His novels, however, all of which I have not read, are the stuff whereof his fame is made; and they are highly vital, and of great value in the sense of commenting on the national character.

"As to Lever, . . . I come to a stand. Ask Miss Mitford what she thinks of the

'Harry Lorrequers,' and she will tell you that the right royal 'Boz' is nothing 'at all at all' to the 'Lorrequers.' This is one of the thousand points on which she and I 'divide,' with no prospect of meeting again — for I *can not read* Lever — honestly and without affectation, I *can not*. She says the reason is, that she has more sympathies with men as men; has associated with them more closely as social men, and acquired the power of comprehending their social pleasures better than I, or women in general, have found it possible to do.¹

"That is probably true; but it scarcely explains to me her admiration for Lorrequer (or Rollicker) Lever. Over and over again have I tried to read his book, and every time I came to the inference that he was a remarkably clever writer who was unreadable by me. Now it can not be affectation — can it? — in a person who never pretends to 'lady-like delicacies' about the sort of book she reads. I,

¹ Miss Mitford's father was a jovial, stick-at-nothing, fox hunting squire of the three-bottle class.

who read the old plays and the modern French romances (behind a screen—don't tell Mr. R——), cannot be hyper-super-over-particular; and I have read Balzac's 'Père Goriot,' and have *not* (could not) one of Lever's novels. What the French call 'material life' is the whole life he recognizes. That life is a jest, and a very loud one, is his philosophy. The sense of Beauty and Love he does not recognize at all, except in a gross and conventional sense. The chapters I have read of him make my head ache as if I had been sitting in the next room to an orgy—not an orgy of fauns, O Orion! which even I could feel the rapture of—but of gentlemen-topers, with their low gentility and hip-hip hurrah! and wine out of wine-coolers. The headache does of course prove the *power*, and that he is an exceedingly clever writer 'nobody can deny;' but he is contracted and conventional, and unrefined in his line of conventionalities; and I can not believe that he represents fairly even the social and jovial side of men of much refinement, or that, if he does, he

should represent them as he does, on all sides thus social and jovial. No writer can render human nature fully, who does not render the inner and spiritual life as well as the conventional and material exterior of life. Is not this true? So much for the Lorrequers.

"Not having read a single volume through, and being of incompetent sympathies, my opinion is not certainly worth much. I hear some of my brothers say sometimes, 'Oh, that Lever is a capital fellow! better than "Boz;"' and then I grow quite cross, and make answer, 'Do put away those detestable books of his,' or 'You don't deserve to read "Boz."' 'Capital fellow,' though, is just the criticism for him. He is *that* — and no more, I think.

"Something more I wished to say to you, but can not, perhaps could not, even if all this had not been written too lightly for a very earnest word to touch nearly in the sequence of it. But I must say this, if I have appeared to you lately — at any time, as I am afraid I must have done — deficient in feeling

and sympathy and consideration—the appearance wronged me as much as my hastiness has sometimes wronged *you*. You will understand, and *I* did not understand.

"May God bless you, dear Mr. Horne. I am glad that the labor is near at an end, and that you are going out of town to finish. 'To finish' makes an agreeable idea.

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B."

There is of course a time when boys and very young men have found great pleasure in the scenes alluded to in the last paragraph but one of the preceding letter; they have enjoyed all "the fun of the fair." But there comes a period of life when one must deeply regret to see time wasted over such books as "Harry Lorrequer."

The amount of popularity they obtained, and similar works, or worse, still obtain, is part of the long-enduring mania for the vile burlesques which are still paramount to a considerable extent in so-called literature.

and to a preponderating extent at theaters and numerous other places of public amusement.

Miss Barrett concludes her letter in a very characteristic manner. She evidently feels how, by comparison, the writings of a gentleman and scholar like Sir Henry Taylor rise into a purer atmosphere by the side of Lever's rollicking works, and it occurs to her that perhaps some of her remarks on the former, and on Mrs. Norton, had a tone of bitterness that almost seemed to approach personality, though nothing of that kind could have been intended; while, in the largeness of her generous nature, she even hints that possibly her estimate of others may be somewhat one-sided, if not too harsh. As for me, I thoroughly agree with every word she says about Lever's boisterous books, and his capital fellowship none the less.

The tone of pathos in the closing paragraph mainly recognizes a brief explanation I made to her concerning the cruel domestic injuries endured by the lady she had criticised —

under the influence of "prejudice," I can have little doubt.

The last critique of an analytical kind that has appeared, so far as I am aware, upon the works in general of Sir Henry Taylor, will be found in "Our Living Poets," by H. Buxton Forman (1871); and it will be interesting to compare his views, which are chiefly analytical, with those of Miss Barrett (1844), which are almost entirely synthetical. Mr. Forman goes through all the principal works in prose and poetry of Sir Henry Taylor, with his usual precision and completeness in respect of the dramatic works, giving an outline of the story in each case, and portraying the leading characters. It would be doing Mr. Forman injustice not to say that he was also synthetical on most great occasions; and he sums up his critique in these words:—

"What we have most to thank Sir Henry Taylor for is the large and statesmanlike intelligence with which, in each of his five historical plays ('Philip van Artevelde' being two distinct plays), he has studied and mastered

an historical situation of no mean significance, and the large and craftsmanlike intelligence with which he has embodied the situation in each instance when mastered. He carries us with him to the times and places of his plays, and sets us in the midst of stir and turbulence, shows us individual life at struggle amid the throes of national life, and gives us the supreme enjoyment that dramatists above all men can give us, of standing 'calm and supercilious' among the lifelike movements of a mimic world, to pass away at will out of its turmoil and agony and bloodshed — keeping the pleasure, and the lessons, and the knowledge, and leaving the pain behind." — Pp. 465-6.

Now the remarkable part of the comparison about to be instituted lies in the fact that, while Miss Barrett takes a totally opposite view of the writings in question, she would nevertheless have agreed, in all probability, with every admiring word Mr. Forman has written about Sir Henry Taylor in respect of the degree of excellence displayed.

XLII.

"Wednesday Morning.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I suppose by an opinion upon Taylor, you mean nothing elaborate — and indeed I am not qualified for it without a little study, having read 'Van Artevelde' once in a hurry long ago, and no work of his subsequently at all. In fact, as you may have imagined, Taylor, who is understood, I understand, by many men of understanding, to be the great poet of the day, is, to my apprehension, scarcely a poet at all, and stands coldly on the outside of my sympathies. Consider! a dramatic poet without passion! what does *that* amount to? A contemplative poet without a heaven of ideality above his head! what shall we call *that*? a rhythmical writer who denies the distinct element of poetry!" [This is a reference to Sir H. Taylor's various Prefaces and Essays.] "How can we respect *that*? A man of talent without genius, probably resumes it all.

"It appears to me that what was said most unjustly of Byron (who, because he had more than his due fame once, or, at least, who had

more exclusive fame than was due to him once, is now denied his just honors — yes, by Mr. Horne, as well as by others); namely, that he wrote eloquence rather than poetry — is the very criticism for Mr. Taylor. Yet, an orator without impulse and exaltation! what does that amount to?

“He has, moreover, to do him justice, an excellent ‘trick of rhetoric,’ and more than a trick; for his thoughts last to the end of his sentences — if not extending (which they do not — there is no *superfluity* of thought) beyond them. He is eloquent in his good sense. His diction is flowing and harmonious, and the ‘flowing’ may be said of it advisedly, because it always finds its own level. His understanding works within it clearly and satisfactorily; his sentiments have a certain attitude of nobleness, which is the highest point in him; and he has a constructive power in the framing of a story, which goes the farther probably with the majority of his readers. For the rest, he may crown the faculty of the understanding, but he can not make a king of

it; he may place it in a niche before an altar, but he can not make a god of it. He remains manifestly an atheist among poets — an infidel in poetry, with arid lines of schism marked hard on his forehead. Where a believing poet, stooping from his elevation, is genial and fresh, he is only as sensible as ever. Poetry has avenged herself upon him. Because he has rejected the mysteries of her highest skies, no dew has fallen from them on the lowest of his flowers. They grow in a certain way, to be sure; he waters them from a watering-pot; but no drop of dew has impearled them with luster, nor wakened them into fragrance. There is a dusty-city feel in the very touch and smell of the leaves. He who has denied the mysteries shall not be happy in the simplicities.

"After all, the right way of looking at the works of Mr. Taylor may be to derive from them a proof of that divinity of poetry which he has attempted to disprove. He is a false prophet, from whose very successes and triumphs may be deduced the falsity of his mis-

sion — a Mahomet (say) whose sword, bloody to the hilt, disproves his altar. From this man we may learn what poetry is. A man of high intellect, active hopes, noble sentiments, and instructed philosophy, and of confidence in his attributes; what more does he need? Nothing, he says. He makes a theory on the strength of his deprivations. Because he works within limits, he blasphemes space. What does his work want? Nothing, he says. Something, the whole world may see! Yes, and it may learn what the essence of poetry *is* by the thing wanting in Mr. Taylor's work.

"*Have I read 'Festus'?* Certainly I have. Do you not remember how I told you of my having asked somebody to read it, and how the somebody confounded me by answering that he was stopped short in the first pages by the 'indecent and blasphemy'? *That* was Mr. Townsend, the 'man of law,' — a man, too, not without poetry in the depths of his soul — albeit with that high, thick Chinese wall built all around it! Oh, yes! I was much struck by 'Festus,' and it was only by

accident that I did not ask you whether you would not do honor to the author of it. You told me yourself he was a man of genius, and of no ordinary genius he is undoubtedly. Both the ‘Festus’ and the supplement apologetic to it, which appeared in the ‘Monthly Repository’¹ (I think), filled me with admiration.

“*He* [the author of ‘Festus’] is a man for heights and depths — is he not? A man of great thoughts. Still, the misfortune of that poem is that it is formed upon Goethe’s, and has thus no originality of design. Its *fault* is an extraordinary inequality, so that really one falls down precipices continually, and from pinnacles of grandeur into profundities of madness. Parts of the poem are as bad and weak as is well possible to be conceived of; and moreover (to do justice to Mr. Townsend) there is an occasional coarseness and gratuitous indelicacy, which the poet’s noble conceptions had ill prepared one to be tolerant of. Also, I will not say that there

¹ It was first printed in J. A. Heraud’s *Monthly Magazine*.

is not some overdaring in relation to divine things, the locutorship of the Holy Ghost being among them.

"But when all is said, what poet-stuff remains! what power! what fire of imagination, worth the stealing of Prometheus! A true poet indeed, and, I believe, a poet incognito; for I never heard anybody speak of him, or write of him [1844], out of *Heraud's* magazine. The periodical critics let him drop as if he scorched their fingers (which I dare say he did) just like a coal, and said nothing about it. . . .

"E. B. B.

"I am glad you like the mottoes, and I lay up the compliment about being a 'woman of business,' because I never, no, never, received the like before, nor am I likely to do so again. The Macaulay article (to return) was as well done as if it had been brooded over for a month by the *genus snail* — and of course I perceived where the taste worked, or rather did not work.

"Will this motto fit Bailey?

'A poet hidden
In the light of thought.' — *Shelley*."

I may remark on this letter that the author of "Festus" is rightly estimated by Miss Barrett. In my opinion his poem shows him to be a "man of great thoughts," — indeed, of the greatest — nothing beyond them has been conceived. With reference to what Miss Barrett terms his "profundities of badness," I may add that his bigotry, even to fanaticism, is as astounding as his genius.

I may here once more notice the powerful influence of habit. Surely one Person of the Trinity should not be regarded as more sacred than another. The name of "God" is constantly used throughout that poem, and occasionally repeated eight or nine times, in one form or another, in the course of a single page, and the fair critic never makes any objection. As to our public places, the name of God is very often used in a theater, without the least token of dissent from the

audience; but let anybody on the stage pronounce the name of either of the two other Persons of the Trinity, and there can not be the remotest doubt of the sort of reproof that would be immediately administered from every part of the house.

XLIII. "Saturday Night [no date, no postmark].

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I know a part and only a part of the thunder and lightning — but far too much, with my window shut down. The 'Westminster Review' I never see. I may assure you truly that I have read the various reviews in question with pain and indignation — and also with another modification of feeling still more depressing. The 'New Monthly's' bitter word — 'Carlyle is said to have knocked a window out of his century,' etc., made me feel *stung* to cry out. 'Me, me, adsum quæ feci.'

"Turn it however as we may, although the book is assuredly unequal, and shows marks of wanting *unity* in some of its important departments — although if you had had more

time, and the work to yourself, you would have made a better and more proportionate book—still, the slaying fault, we may both be very sure, is by no means in the book, but in the envy, malice, and all uncharitableness on every side of us. It is the elemental matter which produces the storm, and not the oak-wood which it rages in. Why we should be surprised or startled I do not know. The vanity of a man is the vulgar form of his sensibility, and as all the gods know, some men have no other sensibility. It is as hard to praise a vain man as to blame him—and if you don't praise him at all, you don't gain much by it. To write a 'New Spirit of the Age' is an aspiration towards martyrdom unnecessary and supererogatory in a poet and a dramatic poet—in an 'unacted dramatist!' You might have had your share of the world's cruelty without it, we should think. Only you are so aspiring!

“Let them rave! That the book does not deserve their abuse we know as well as they themselves do—and there is no need to know

better. What turns *against* it is simply the worm — or the friend of the worm, wormy, and right wormily!

"And were it otherwise, this book is an accident of your literary life. You have other books to live by. This book, although worthy of all our respect for the thought and talent expended in it, and especially for the honesty and high-mindedness everywhere obvious in it, is certainly not worthy of being the subject of one over-anxious or painful thought in your mind.

"Let them rave, I say — and that reminds me, if you have no objection, will you tell me that Tennyson is not among the 'waiters to see.' I shall be glad to know that he is not one; if he is not satisfied I shall be surprised. But if he 'waits to see' I shall be thunder-struck still more.

"Do not waver in the second edition for any of their cries of dumb beasts.

"For E. B. B. — she has only to be grateful to you. Oh, one feels so stupidly constrained in speaking of one's self. Why should it be so?

"Bear in your mind, then, with regard to me, that I thoroughly understand the fullness both of your kindness and your integrity. You are my friend, I hope ; but you do not on that account lose the faculty of judging me, or the right of judging me frankly. I do loathe the whole system of personal compliment as a consequence of a personal interest, and I beseech you not to suffer yourself *ever* by any sort of kind impulse from within, or extraneous influence otherwise, to say or modify a word relating to me. The notice as it stands can be called 'inadequate' only in one way — that you enter on no analysis of my poetical claims in it. In every other respect you know it is *extravagantly laudatory*. You have rouged me up to the eyes. In fact, the intention of being kind is so visible in that article, that if I had read it as relating to another person, I should have been quite sure of the person being in some way personally connected with you.

"Now mark ! If in the second edition you do enter on the subject of the poetry, what is

likely to be the end of it? You have spoken kindly of my poetry sometimes ; but I do not know your precise estimate of it. I say I do not know — but I may perhaps have my thoughts on the subject — my fancies — for *I* too (like Mr. Westwood) can look a little way into a post ; and there is a dreadful possibility (at least) in my eyes, that you may be led to say something to please me which might be said in violence to your colder judgment. Not that you would do so consciously! I know you would not. But I wish you to bear in your mind — first, that under circumstances which are conceivable it would be better to leave the notice as it is ; and secondly, that in any case of your approaching the subject of my poetry, you will please me best by speaking out the truth as it occurs to you, broadly, roughly, coarsely, in its whole dimensions. I set more price on your sincerity than on your praise, and consider it more closely connected with the quality called kindness. Recollect that these people who offer a pin to me that they may prick you with it

in passing, do not care a pin for me. The ‘New Monthly,’ who says so courteously ‘all Greek and passion,’ would probably say, ‘all twaddle and trumpery’ if it was reviewing me. I understand *that* fully! If I wanted any kindness I should go to you and not to them. And now I want kindness the rarest of all nearly — which is truth.

“This is a preface to what I am going to reply to your request about the proofs, etc. How it is possible for me to translate ‘all my principal poems’ into prose for your information, I am sure I don’t know. But, the preface being understood, and the conditions, — viz., that you do not suffer yourself to be driven into a violent resolution of trying to say certain things, and that I am not expecting such things to be said — I will send you whatever I can in the way of proofs. My private opinion is that you had better leave the notice unenlarged, and I am most grateful to you as it is. *But* if you enlarge it you must speak out the whole truth, or I will not be instrumental in helping you to information.

Now, mind! your best compliment to me is the truth at all times, without reference to sex or friendship. I excuse the unbonneting. You are Orion, and I can estimate you, and neither of us mind the buzz of these wasps.

"You must understand that it is miserable to stand before you as somebody 'noticed inadequately,' who desires another obolus in the second edition for the sake of 'Dead Pan,' etc.! The very thought of it has made me feel reserved towards you about my new book.

"Yes — Leigh Hunt's 'Godiva' I have, but unfortunately I lent it to somebody a few days ago. Can you wait for it? How long can you wait? I fancied that in your notice of Tennyson's you had intentionally waived any comparison. Yet Hunt's has the palm, I fancy. I think by recollection that it has.

"I hope my book will be out in a few weeks now. It fags me and over-excites me too much. Perhaps you will think me improved? Perhaps — I seem to myself to have more strength. I only wish that souls and bodies would draw together.

"I wish that in this second edition of yours you would give Mary Howitt room to take her full stature. She appears in the book simply as Mrs. Howitt, William's wife, whereas his reputation has grown from the stem of hers. Her prose is inferior, but her poetry will live, I think. Then Mrs. Trollope is too hardly treated for justice. At the end of my paper — and of your meekness!

"Ever and gratefully yours,

"E. B. B."

Allusion having been made to Landor with reference to "Napoleon the First," an extract from one of Miss Barrett's private letters will prove interesting in the shape of a fragment of literary vengeance which the poet bequeathed to the Conqueror:—

XLIV.

"Your 'Life of Napoleon' touched me very much; and what I estimated was that we are not suffered in this, as in some other animated narratives, to be separated from our

higher feelings without our consciousness. I like the tone of thought distinguishable through, and from, the cannonading, — the half sarcasm dropped, as unaware, among the pseudo glories which are the subjects of description. 'The dead say nothing.' There are fine things, too, more than I can count, particularly with the book out of sight. The Duke d'Enghien's death has haunted me, with the concluding words on human power — that 'effluence of mortality already beginning to decay.' The book's fault is its inequality of style; in fact, that you didn't write it all; and I am consistent enough not to complain of that. Did you ever see Mr. Landor's epigram upon Napoleon? He was so kind as to give it to me, the only evening I ever spent in his company, — and here it is: —

*'Τίς ποτε, Ναπόλεον, τὰ σὰ πρῶτα καὶ ὁσάτα γράψει
Ἔργα; Χρόνος τέκνων αἵματι θερπόμενος.'*

Receiving this epigram while on a visit with a mutual lady-friend in the country, I requested her the next time she called on Miss

Barrett to hand her the following paraphrastic translation, —

"Napoleon! thy deeds beyond compeers,
Who shall write, thrillingly? —
The Father of Years!
And — with the blood of children — willingly."

Feeling that there was another side to the question, I requested the same lady to hand also another epigram to the fair secluded classic, —

"Holy Alliance! — Time can scarcely tell
To heaven or hell,
What blood and treasure sank into the void
Of hushed-up night,
For 'Divine Right,' —
Which that one man destroyed!"

This subject naturally leads to recollections of the first great French Revolution, — to Carlyle's wonderfully graphic work on that subject, — and to several letters from Miss Barrett concerning Carlyle, which were printed in the critical work previously mentioned. But the following letter was *not* printed, hav-

ing arrived some days too late. The references to theological dogmas are characterized by the writer's usual independence of thought, and force of expression : —

XLV.

"It is impossible to part from this subject without touching upon a point of it we have already glanced at by an illustration, when we said that his object was to discover the sun, and not to specify the landscape. He is, in fact, somewhat indefinite in his ideas of 'faith' and 'truth.' In his ardor for the quality of belief, he is apt to separate it from its objects; and although in the remarks on tolerance in his 'Hero Worship' he guards himself strongly from an imputation of latitudinarianism, yet we can not say but that he sometimes overleaps his own fences, and sets us wondering whither he would be speeding. This is the occasion of some disquiet to such of his readers as discern that the *truth itself* is a more excellent thing than our *belief* in the truth; and that, *à priori*, our *belief* does not

make the truth. But it is the effect, more or less, of every abstract consideration that we are inclined to hold the object of abstraction some moments longer in its state of separation and analysis than is at all necessary or desirable. And after all, the right way of viewing the matter is that Mr. Carlyle intends to teach us something, and not every thing; and to direct us to a particular instrument, and not to direct us in its specific application. It would be a strange reproach to offer to the morning star, that it does not shine in the evening.

"For the rest, we may congratulate Mr. Carlyle and the dawning time. We have observed that individual genius is the means of popular advancement. A man of genius gives a thought to the multitude, and the multitude spread it out as far as it will go, until another man of genius brings another thought, which attaches itself to the first, because all truth is assimilative, and perhaps even reducible to that monadity of which Parmenides discoursed. Mr. Carlyle is gradually

amassing a greater reputation than might have been looked for at the hands of this polytechnic age, and has the satisfaction of witnessing with his living eyes the outspread of his thought among nations. That this Thought—the ideas of this prose poet—should make way with sufficient rapidity for him to live to see the progress, is a fact full of hope for the coming age; even as the other fact, of its first channel furrowing America (and it is a fact that Carlyle was generally read there before he was truly recognized in his own land), is replete with favorable promise for that great country, and indicative of a noble love of truth in it passing the love of dollars."

The following fragment of a letter was not intended for the work previously mentioned, but might very well have been included in it -- although I should have proposed here and there to interpolate an adverse word: —

XLVI.

"I have been reading Carlyle's 'Past and Present.' There is nothing new in it, even of Carlyleism — but almost every thing true. But tell me, why should he call the English people a silent people, whose epics are in *action*, and whose Shakspeare and Milton are mere accidents of their condition? Is that true? Is not this contrary, most extremely, to truth?" [Indeed I do think it very true.]

"This English people — has it not a nobler, a fuller, a more abounding and various literature than all the peoples of the earth, 'past or present,' dead or living, all except one — the Greek people? It is 'fact,' and not 'sham,' that our literature is the fullest, and noblest, and most suggestive — do you not think so? I wish I knew Mr. Carlyle, to look in his face and say, 'We are a most singing people — a most eloquent and speechful people — we are none of us silent, except the undertaker's *mutes*.'

"Most truly and loquaciously yours,

"E. B. BARRETT."

Had I been challenged so stoutly — nay, charged home at the point of the pen — in our present day, I should certainly have taken side with Thomas Carlyle. By a "singing people" must be meant either poets or vocalists, and in both cases, especially the former, the men of genius have always been exceptions. We all know how Shakspeare and Milton were regarded in their own day; and if such men now lived, we see clearly how they would be treated by managers of theaters, and by nearly every living publisher — for the good business reason that "they wouldn't sell."

The next letter has reference to a paper of mine which appeared at the conclusion of "A New Spirit of the Age."

XLVII.

"I differ with you about Wordsworth, and have suggested several phrases marginally, which with a little addition would set us on a level again on that ground; only you probably will not desire it.

"See, here it is. Wordsworth's principle is, that *nothing mean is in nature*. True, as to nature herself. You say, to Wordsworth alone it is true: if anybody else calls a daisy noble, he is an imitator by that sign. The daisy is a mean flower to all the world except William Wordsworth.

"In which you are wrong, O Orion! because that daisy under the heel of a clown has a lesson, if sought for; yes, and a lesson 'apostolical' for the clown, though he never heard of the master.

"If you had confined yourself to a reproof of the cant of the naturals, who, because buttercups are not mean, will see nothing in nature except buttercups, and mimic the master's emotion as they look between the petals; if you had denounced this cant, as feeling at second-hand — which is *not* feeling but cant, and only more morally innocent (not less fatiguing) than that of Byron's imitators with their broken hearts instead of neckcloths — I should agree, ay, go with you altogether. But — no time, you see!

"Ever yours,

"E. B. B."

Miss Barrett has the best of it, and I told her so. The remarks she referred to were modified in accordance with her argument. I merely showed that whatever greatness has originated in Wordsworth's mind from his habit of refusing "to share any glory with his subject" by the systematic selection of things devoid of much obvious interest in themselves, and, as he often declares, on account of their meanness to the eye, or to the general impression of mankind, it is much to be doubted if the adoption of this principle *by others* will not lead them downwards in the scale of enthusiasm. It may tend to throw them exclusively upon their individualities, which may not inaptly be represented by this paraphrase of a witty old couplet—

"My thought is great because the object's mean:
Then 'twould be greater were no object seen."

This must not be misunderstood. It is such poems as Wordsworth's "Laodamia"—the scriptural grandeur of simplicity in "Michael"—the high-wrought fervors of his

immortal "Ode" (and not his illustrations of the "meanest objects"), that all lovers of poetry so deeply admire.

A few paragraphs from the work in question, extracted from the critical estimates of Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, and Tennyson, may not be unacceptable; but I should probably have hesitated to give them, had not the work been long out of print. The letters containing them followed each other in rapid succession.

"LONDON, 1843.

"Mr. Wordsworth began his day with a dignity and determination of purpose which might well have startled the public and all its small poets and critics, his natural enemies. He laid down fixed principles in his prefaces, and carried them out with rigid boldness in his poems; and when the world laughed, he bore it well. With a severe hand he tore away from his art the encumbering artifices of his predecessors, and he walked upon the pride of criticism with greater pride. He

laid his hand upon the Pegasean mane, and testified that it was not floss-silk. He testified that the ground was not all lawn or bowling-green: and that the forest-trees were not clipped upon a pattern. He scorned to be contented with a tradition of beauty, or with an abstraction of the beautiful. He refused to work, as others had done, like those sculptors who make all their noses in the fashion of that of the Medicean Venus, until no one has his own nose, nature being 'cut to order.' A minute observer of exterior nature, his humanity seems nevertheless to stand between it and him; and he confounds these two lives — not that he loses himself in the contemplation of things, but that he absorbs them in himself and renders them Wordsworthian. Chaucer and Burns made the most of a daisy, but left it still a daisy; Wordsworth leaves it transformed into his thoughts. This is the sublime of egotism, disinterested as extreme. It is on the entity of the man Wordsworth that the vapor creeps along the hill — and the mountains 'are a feeling.' To use the lan-

guage of the German schools, he makes a subjectivity of his objectivity. Beyond the habits and purposes of his individuality he can not carry his sympathies; and of all powerful writers he is the least dramatic. Another reason, however, for his dramatic inaptitude, is his deficiency in passion. He is passionate in his will and reason, but not in his senses and affections; and perhaps scarcely in his fancy and imagination. His 'Poems of the Imagination' settle that question. Like many other great men he can be dull and prolix. If he has not written too many sonnets it may be doubted if he has not burned too few. Gravity and moral aim are Wordsworth's most prevailing characteristics. His very cheerfulness is a smile over the altar — a smile of benediction which no one dares return — and expressive of good-will rather than sympathy. . . . After the public had denied Wordsworth the possession of any of the highest faculties of the mind, during twenty years, the same public has seen good to reward him with the highest faculties in excess." . . .

With regard to Leigh Hunt, —

"Something very like the principle here announced is discoverable in Chaucer and Shakspeare, who usually give the bane and antidote in close relation, do justice to every one on all sides, and never insist upon a good thing or a bad one; but display an impartiality which often amounts to the humorous. Leigh Hunt's manner of doing this was the chief offense; for while the elder poets left the readers to their own conclusions, our author chose to take the case upon himself, so that he identified himself with the provocation of those readers who were defeated in the expectation of a different decision."

It is scarcely necessary to say that none of these remarks were from Miss Barrett's pen. The following relates to Tennyson: —

"The poetic fire is one simple and intense element in human nature; it has its source in the divine mysteries of our existence; it

develops with the first abstract delight of childhood, the first youthful aspiration towards something beyond our mortal reach; and eventually becomes the master passion of those who are possessed with it in the highest degree, and the most ennobling influence that can be exercised upon the passions of others. At times, and in various degrees, all are open to the influence of the poetic element. Its objects are palpable to the external senses, in proportion as individual perception and sensibility have been habituated to contemplate them with interest and delight; and palpable to the imagination in proportion as an individual possesses this faculty, and has habituated it to ideal subjects and profoundly sympathetic reflections. If there be a third condition of its presence, it must be that of a certain consciousness of dreamy glories in the soul, with vague emotions, aimless impulses, and prophetic sensations, which may be said to tremble on the extreme verge of the fermenting source of that poetic fire by which the life of humanity is purified and adorned.

The first and second of these conditions must be clear to all; the last will not receive so general an admission, and may not be so intelligible to everybody. . . .

"Perhaps the first spell cast by Mr. Tennyson — the master of many spells — he cast upon the ear. His power as a lyrical versifier is remarkable. The measures flow softly, or roll nobly from his pen, as well one as the other. He can gather up his strength like a serpent in the gleaming coil of a line; or dart it out straight and free. Nay, he will write you a poem with nothing in it except music, and, as if its music were every thing, it shall charm your soul. Be this said, not in reproach, but in honor of him and of the English language, for the learned sweetness of his numbers. . . .

"In music and color he was equalled by Shelley; but in *form*, clearly defined, with no apparent effort, and no harsh strides or lines, Tennyson stands unrivalled.

"His ideality is both adornative and creative, although up to this period [1844] it is

ostensibly rather the former than the latter. His ideal faculty is either satisfied with an exquisitely delicate arabesque painting, or clears the ground before him so as to melt and disperse all other objects into a suitable atmosphere or aerial perspective, while he takes horse on a passionate impulse, as in some of his ballads, which seem to have been panted through without a single pause. This is the case in 'Oriana,' in 'Locksley Hall,' in 'The Sisters,' etc. Or, at other times, selecting some ancient theme, he stands collected and self-contained, and rolls out, with an impressive sense of dignity, orb after orb of that grand melancholy music of blank verse which leaves long vibrations in the reader's memory, as in 'Ulysses,' the divine 'CEnone,' or the 'Morte d'Arthur.'

"Alfred Tennyson may be considered generally under four different aspects—developed separately, or in collective harmony, according to the nature of the subject—that is to say, as a poet of fairyland and enchantment; as a poet of profound sentiments (as Wordsworth

is in the intellect and moral feelings) ; as a painter of pastoral nature ; and as a delineator and representer of tragic emotions, chiefly with reference to one particular passion.

"Those critics who have seized upon the poet's early lines — his Claribels, Lilians, Adelines, Madelines — declaring they were not natural beings of flesh and blood, have tried them by a false standard. They do not belong to the flesh and blood class. They are creatures of the elements of poetry. And for that reason they have a sensuous life of their own, as far removed from the ordinary bodily conditions as from pure spirit. They are transcendentalisms of the senses ; examples of the Homeric *εἰδωλα*, or rather, if we may venture to trace the genealogical history of such fragile creatures — the descendants of those *εἰδωλα*, as modified by the influence of the romantic ages. . . ."

This critique on Tennyson was a joint production, but (excepting the opening paragraph) all the foregoing was contained in Miss Barrett's letters.

Such were the views taken of these great writers in 1844; and although very much additional matter would be required in order to do justice to the poems given to the world by the Laureate since that date, I am not aware of any thing of importance that requires alteration in what was there set down. Some slight differences of opinion on trifling questions occurred, now and then, which were easily accommodated. As my name only was to stand as sponsor for the entire contents of the two volumes, of course the casting vote was mine, but I seldom availed myself of it in any direct opposition to Miss Barrett, nor was there reason to do so. Some degree of esoteric amusement may no doubt be derived from the private exhibition of that picture (Vol. I., p. 187) of two authoresses secretly arrayed against two authors, on matters of theology and ethics — one of the latter being arraigned as an old offender, the other being a counsel for the defense. But if there were no better defender than I at that time, there certainly is one now. After an absence of

nearly twenty years in the South Seas, the very first occasion of my re-union with old friends was at the uncovering of the memorial bust of Leigh Hunt in the Cemetery of Kensal Green. On that occasion an address was delivered by Lord Houghton in one of the side-rooms of the Chapel, from no rostrum or oratorial platform, but simply standing upon one of the chairs. From this very unprepossessing "vantage-ground," and with a crowd inconveniently close underneath, was given, with the unaffected ease and pathos of that simple eloquence that comes direct from the heart through the brain, a brief discourse, or rather a tender intellectual monody, gracefully setting forth the works and character of Leigh Hunt. Those who, like myself, had been intimately acquainted with the poet, the essayist, and cruelly-imprisoned politician, constituted the most exacting audience that could possibly have been collected for the occasion. Lord Houghton's monody was listened to with profound silence, slightly broken only by tokens of sympathy, and at the close was unanimously

declared by those most competent to judge of it in all respects not only as satisfactory, but perfect in every point that was touched upon. It was done with equal breadth and nicety. One remark in especial I treasured up as a happy explanation of many difficulties. It was that Leigh Hunt's entire sympathy with human nature was of that loving, one-sided kind that he seemed quite to ignore all the evil in the world—it might in fact be said that "he had an absolute *superstition for good*" which made him unable to distinguish the many ills and evils that surround us. That is "the key" to most of the extreme, and now and then extravagant and provoking things he wrote, and used to say among private friends. Alluding, incidentally, to one of the most licentious of the French novels, he—his own life being absolutely pure—suddenly exclaims (in what book I forget, and quote from memory), "It is the greatest mistake possible to call such books immoral and wicked, when nothing of that kind is intended!—and while the girl has a real affec-

tion for her lover." He saw nothing but the love. I have heard him repeat most impressively certain lines which with almost any other person's delivery would seem shocking. It was the epitaph composed by a Dutchman — well known to some, but for obvious reasons little known generally — to be graven upon his own tombstone : —

"Here lieth Martin Eltenbrod:
Have mercy on his soul, O God!
As he would have, if he were God,
And *Thou wert Martin Eltenbrod!*"¹

If these lines are read off boldly most people will be shocked ; but when Leigh Hunt gave the two last lines, his voice lowered, he closed his eyes with solemn reverence, and bowed down his head in humility, which was impressive even to tears. Surely that makes all the difference? But again, when he "rallied" — as I remember on another occasion after repeating the same epitaph — some hearers would say — "That spoils all!" — for he

¹ [Dr. George MacDonald informs me that this epitaph is said to be in Aberdeen Churchyard. — S. R. T. M.]

exclaimed, "There now! — there was a *man*! a man for the Creator to be proud of. God must have felt that He had succeeded!" Regarded in an ordinary light, no doubt the words would seem highly irreverent, or worse, — but then the ordinary light is precisely the wrong light, and controverts what was meant by the speaker. The words are irreverent only upon the surface, while in their subtle undercurrent we are conscious that they only indicate that which we all know of the world containing so many gross instances not merely of *failures* in, but of disgraces to, humanity — brutal creatures who remind us of any thing but a Divine Image, and compared with whom some of our domestic animals are far more to be regarded and respected. Some ears of corn come up mildewed "blasting their wholesome brother," — and so do some men. Any image-maker might disown them. I scarcely know how to believe in the antiquated proverb — ἐκ τοῦ κέραμου μέροντες εἰς τὴν ἅπαντες, because it seems obvious that some men are *not* made of the same clay as others, or by the same

potter's hand. It would appear as if a devil of some sort must have had "a finger" in the production of many of the images. And striking "likenesses" they certainly are. These latter remarks Leigh Hunt would not have made, because he only looked at the good side of things—the creations which were excellent.

Leigh Hunt lived so entirely in his own family circle, that he was unaware of certain peculiarities becoming of a kind to excite a feeling different from that which occupied himself. I have heard him quite apologize to his wife and daughters for having expended eighteen-pence at an old book-stall, explaining how useful and valuable the work would be to him, — and this at a time when the improvidence of others had brought him into trouble. "Yet in himself," as Lord Houghton so truly said, "he was a most self-denying man." He was fond of writing and talking about the country, but knew little of its *flora* and *fauna* beyond some dozen of flowers and half a dozen birds. A few flowers in a glass of

water on his writing-table was to him a garden, and a "look-out" upon a distant green field was his country life. The rest was an imaginary Italy. I once heard him discourse while standing in front of a bed of winter cabbages covered with a sparkling hoar-frost, as though it was Nature's jewelry of emeralds and diamonds set in frosted silver; and assuredly I have read something of a similar kind in one of his essays. But I have been recently reminded by Lord Houghton of a far more striking instance of a degree of simplicity that could not perceive there was any thing ludicrous in its grave counsels, when earnestly exhorting a poor man, if he could not afford to buy flowers, to take home a handful of grass to his wife, so that they might contemplate Nature by that means. And I am sure that Leigh Hunt would have repeated it, and justified it by asking if it were not better than staring at each other over a bare deal table.

Here, however, I must leave him, with a thought and a sigh towards Kensal Green, and all its silent memorials.

IV.

LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS.

"The Dead Pan" — Miss Barrett's Innovations in Rhyme — Her Double-Rhymes — Miss Mitford's Conservative Views respecting the Art of Poetry — The Spanish *rima asonante* — How to reconcile License in Rhyme — Versification — Chaucer's Rhythmical Variations — Miss Barrett's — The Laureate's — Douglas Jerrold — "An Omnivorous Cousin" — Albany Fonblanque — Original Sketch of "A Drama of Exile" — Sarah Stickney (Mrs. Ellis) — Harriet Martineau — Gossip — Sara Coleridge — Miss Barrett's Opinion of "The London Doll" — Mrs. Jameson — Leigh Hunt and Ben Jonson — Wordsworth and the Lake Railroad — Carlyle and Mesmerism — Edgar Allan Poe — Miss Barrett contemplates leaving England — "Ballad Romances" — Robert Browning at Pisa — The "Daily News" in Ireland during the Famine — Miss Barrett's Marriage — In the Footsteps of Byron, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt — Florence — Ravenna — At Dante's Tomb — Mr. and Mrs. Browning's Return to England — Departure for Paris.

MISS BARRETT, as I have already mentioned,

sent me the MS. of her beautiful poem "The Dead Pan," asking my opinion about it, where it would be best to forward it for publication, or if it should be reserved for a special volume. Of course I admired its poetry and versification, but concerning her view of perfect and imperfect, or *allowable* rhymes, in that, and several of her other productions, I wished, once for all, to object, and give full reasons for it. Strange to say, while various unfortunate men have received the severest censure for trifling licenses, my correspondent has but seldom been called to account for her numerous violations of all received principles of English rhyme. But what a compliment it was to her genius, and to the energy and euphony of her verse, that critics were carried away by the stream, and rarely took heed of the sticks and straws that were passing. The fact also implies a compliment to the critics.

The poem of "The Dead Pan" opens with this verse, —

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
 Can ye listen in your silence?
 Can your mystic voices tell us
 Where ye hide! In floating islands,
 With a wind that evermore
 Keeps you out of sight of shore?
 Pan, Pan is dead."

Having been requested to make my comments on this then unpublished poem, I commenced with a due appreciation of its subject, treatment, and the euphonious flow of the versification; but took objection to many of the rhymes. I did not like "tell us" as a rhyme for "Hellas;" and still less "islands" as a rhyme for "silence." The only excuse for them was the difficulty with regard to the first, and the impossibility of the second, as there was no perfect rhyme for either in the English language. I suggested that perhaps they were not intended as absolute rhymes at all, but euphonious quantities of the *rima asonante* class? — or was it considered that the rhymes being on the first syllables (*Hell* and *tell*, *si* and *I*) instead of the last, they were to be

regarded as fair exchanges? In verse iv., I accepted "rolls on" and "the sun," and "altars" and "welters," on the principle of allowable rhymes, as they were quite as good as "corses" and "forces" where the letters were all right and recognized as true rhymes — which they really are *not*. In verse vi., I objected to "flowing" and "slow in" (the rhyme being only on the first syllable), and in verse xii., to "golden" and "enfolding," for the same reason. In verse xiii., "iron" was very badly rhymed by "inspiring," being only a rhyme on *ir*. "Panther" and "saunter" in the next verse were bad. In verse xvi., "driven" and "heaving" were not admissible. In verse xix., "turret" and "chariot" could only be excusable on the equivocal ground that there was no rhyme to either of them in the language, and it might seem generous to wed them for that reason, if not quite justifiable. The words "o'er her" and "horror" — "angels" and "candles," — "nothing" and "truth in," could only be excused on the same grounds, as there were

no rhymes in the language to "nothing," "angels," or "horror." There were several more of these anomalies in the same poem, but I felt I had said quite enough. The following letter will show to what purpose I had preached and prayed.

LVI.

[No date, but apparently written in London.]

"Oh — you are a gnasher of teeth in criticism, I see! — you are a lion and a tiger in one, and in a most carnivorous mood, over and above. My dear Mr. Horne, — do you know, I could not help, in the midst of my horror and Pan-ic terror, smiling outright at the naïveté of your doubt as to whether my rhymes were really meant for rhymes at all? That is the naïveté of a right savage nature — of an Indian playing with a tomahawk, and speculating as to whether the white faces had any feeling in their skulls, *quand même!* Know, then, that my rhymes *are* really meant for rhymes — and that I take them to be actual rhymes — as good rhymes as any used by

rhymers, and that in no spirit of carelessness or easy writing, or desire to escape difficulties, have I run into them, — but chosen them, selected them, on principle, and with the determinate purpose of doing my best, in and out of this poem, to have them received! What you say of a 'poet's duty,' no one in the world can feel more deeply, in the verity of it, than myself. If I fail ultimately before the public — that is, before the people — for an ephemeral popularity does not appear to me worth trying for — it will not be because I have shrunk from the amount of labor — where labor could do any thing. I have *worked* at poetry — it has not been with me revery, but art. As the physician and lawyer work at their several professions, so have I, and so do I, apply to mine. And this I say, only to put by any charge of carelessness which may rise up to the verge of your lips or thoughts.

"With reference to the double rhyming, it has appeared to me employed with far less variety in our *serious* poetry than our language would admit of genially, — and that

the various employment of it would add another string to the lyre of our Terpander. It has appeared to me that the single rhymes, as usually employed, are scarcely as various as they might be, but that of the double rhymes the observation is still truer. A great deal of attention—far more than it would take to rhyme with conventional accuracy—have I given to the subject of rhymes, and have determined in cold blood to hazard some experiments. At the same time, I should tell you, that scarcely one of the ‘Pan’ rhymes might not separately be justified *by the analogy of received rhymes*, although they have not themselves been received. Perhaps (also) there is not so irregular a rhyme throughout the poem of ‘Pan’ as the ‘fellow’ and ‘prunella’ of Pope the infallible.” [Bad as this may be—and every poet of any vigor has abundance of bad, as well as half rhymes—there is a

¹ The masterly use of double, treble, and all sorts of rhymes in comic verse—such as in “Hudibras,” “Don Juan,” Thomas Hood’s Poems, and others, is some proof of this argument.

marked difference between that sort of badness and what was pointed out in the "Dead Pan."'] "I maintain that my 'islands' and 'silence' is a regular rhyme in comparison. Tennyson's 'tendons' and 'attendance' is more objectionable to my mind than either. You, who are a reader of Spanish poetry, must be aware how soon the ear may be satisfied even by a recurring vowel. I mean to try it. At any rate, there are so few regular double rhymes in the English language that we must either admit some such trial or eschew the double rhymes generally; and I, for one, am very fond of them, and believe them to have a power not yet drawn out to its length and capable development, in our lyrical poetry especially.

"And now, upon all this — to prove to you that I do not set out on this question with a minority of one — I take the courage and vanity to send to you a note which a poet¹ whom we both admire wrote to a friend of mine

¹ Robert Browning, then personally quite unknown to Miss Barrett, although an intimate friend of my own.

who lent him the MS. of this very 'Pan Mark! — no opinion was asked about the rhymes, — the satisfaction was altogether impulsive — from within. Send me the note back, and never tell anybody that I showed it to you — it would appear too vain. Also, I have no right to show it. It was sent to me as likely to please me, — and pleased me so much and naturally on various accounts, and not least from the beauty of the figure used to illustrate my *rhymatology*, that I begged to be allowed to keep it. So, send it back, after reading it confidentially, and pardon me as much as you can of the self-will fostered by it.

"Why shouldn't I (also) say 'very pale,' if I please, for all Mr. Lockhart?¹ It is very ludicrous, if I may not! I say no more 'verys' than other people — and defy all the critics in the world to prove it. Let them

¹ In the "Quarterly Review," always so fond of "doing a mischief" where poets and poetry are concerned. He carped and caviled at several paltry and insignificant matters, such as the frequent use of "very," and sounding the *es* at the close of certain words.

count, and sec. As to Tennyson, his admirer I am, and his imitator I am *not*, as certainly. Nearly every thing in the 'Seraphim' was written before I ever read *one* of his then published volumes: and even the 'instructing the reader to say *ed*,' was done on the pattern of Campbell's 'Theodric,' and not from a later example. In these last volumes of mine I have eschewed all signs whatever of a diæresis pronounc'd or unpronounc'd, so as to give no offense either to myself or other people. But it would be sheer weakness to throw out a word from your vocabulary because somebody is pleased to hang his own foolscap on it. Let it hang there! It is not mine, — and I need not fear the disgrace of it.

"About the 'Pans'" [the too frequent repetitions] "you are right, and I shall thin them as much as I can. For all your kindness about the poem I am also grateful — 'very' grateful, if you will let me be so insolent to Mr. Lockhart.

"You are a bloody critic, nevertheless. I

am glad to hear of B——, and agree with you on the point of Patmore.

“ Ever and truly yours,

“ E. B. B.”

It will readily be supposed that upon receiving this letter I did not think it right to persevere with any further comments. It is always best, even with far inferior persons, to avoid a sore subject. The next time, however, that I went on my usual visit to Miss Mitford, at Three Mile Cross, during “ the strawberry season,” as she called it, I determined to have the matter fully out with her in her garden summer-house, in face of all the geraniums. As she was a lady of the “ old school,” I was prepared for resistance when I unfolded my views as to the large number of allowable rhymes it seemed important, and indeed necessary, to admit in English lyrical verse. She broke in upon me at the outset, with —

“ Oh, pray do not teach or promulgate any thing to make the Art of Poetry easier and

more open to all-comers. Do every thing you can to throw all sorts of difficulties in the way. The world is over-stocked already with minor and minikin poets, and the crop multiplies every year. One of the very best things I have ever done in my life is to have nipped in the bud half a dozen young poetesses. Elegant girls have come to me declaring they had been visited by poetical impulses, and begging me to read what they had written. A very little was enough, and I assured them that such things had all been done over and over again."

Admitting the good service thus rendered, not only to the young ladies themselves, but to their future husbands and children, I still requested to be heard, and told her of the recent correspondence with Miss Barrett. Then she listened very attentively. Repeating the broad views I entertained as to allowable rhymes, both single and double, I also spoke of the freedom as well as the harmonious variety to be attained by adopting, occasionally, the Spanish *asonante* verse, of

which our language was highly capable, though it had so very seldom been used. The "Magico Prodigioso"¹ of Calderon, I said, opens with this sort of verse. Miss Mitford agreed that it was "all very well for the Spanish, but thought it would not do in English verse." I then told her of the battle over the "Dead Pan" manuscript, adding my objections to certain rhymes in another of our friend's poems — such as "children," "bewildering," and "stilled in;" — "resounding" and "round him," — "Heaven" and "unbelieving;" — the fact being, whether the poetess intended it or not, that she was introducing a system of rhyming the first syllables and leaving the last to a question of euphonious quantity. This I frankly admitted she had effected so well that it did not hurt my ear, and I had protested against it as con-

¹ Admirably translated by Denis Florence MacCarthy. Southey and Shelley were very harmonious in the use of the short lines of an irregular blank verse; but their rhythmic quantities were as usual, and not like Mr. MacCarthy's. Robert Buchanan, in his "Book of Orm," has adopted this *sonante* verse very successfully.

trary to all received usage mainly to save her from critical onslaught, especially of those who could not appreciate her genius and her excellency in other respects. In like manner, "Bion" and "undying," — "Bacchantes" and "grant us," — "deep in" and "leaping," were all rhymes on only the first or the second syllable. I had, moreover, discovered that when there was *no* rhyme to a word, the lady was inspired, probably without being clearly aware of the fact, to unite another word in the same condition of single life; thus, among other instances, —

"But natural Beauty shuts her bosom
To what the natural feelings tell!
Albeit I sigh'd, the trees would blossom —
Albeit I smiled, the blossoms fell."

Who can say such a euphonious verse hurts the ear? — and who can fail to admire it as poetry? One felt ashamed of having foraged out the fact that there was no rhyme in the English language either to "bosom" or to "blossom." There seemed, indeed, an *et tu Brute* look through the air on the whole of these objections.

Miss Mitford smiled like a summer morning, but shook her head. Fixed associations made her unable to look at the question in any new light. It was the same with Leigh Hunt, and others. The delightful authoress of "Our Village," at this time, was a bright silvery sixty, and her face always shone as brightly as her hair. I never saw a blooming girl of sixteen with a more fruity hopefulness in her countenance. Yet she clung to the past, not because she would not go on with the stream of things, but because from early training and habits of mind she *could* not. These new theories of rhyme outraged her notions of propriety, and, much as she loved and admired Miss Barrett, she refused to entertain them, and more than hinted reproof to me for my large allowance in such matters. The special examples I had given she met with the following anecdote of another person, which, had it been narrated with any humorous or graphic art of the ordinary sort, would have had a rather ludicrous effect. But Miss Mitford's humor was of a peculiar kind. She

never adorned or “embellished,” or used any mimetic art—if she possessed it—but just placed the facts in a simple and prominent position, and slowly and dryly delivered them with all the gravity of a chronicle. Strongly objecting to the rhyming licenses adopted by the poetess, she thus proceeded to account for, and in part excuse them:—

“Our dear friend, you are aware, never sees anybody but the members of her own family, and one or two others. She has a high opinion of the skill in *reading*, as well as the fine taste, of Mr. —, and she gets him to read her new poems aloud to her, and so tries them upon him (as well as herself), something after the manner of Molière with regard to a far less elegant authority. So Mr. — stands upon the hearth-rug, and uplifts the MS., and his voice, while our dear friend lies folded up in Indian shawls upon her sofa, with her long black tresses streaming over her bent-down head, all attention. Now, dear Mr. — has lost a front tooth—not quite a front one, but a side front one—and

this, you see, causes a defective utterance. It does not induce a lisp, or a hissing kind of whistle, as with low people similarly circumstanced, but an amiable indistinctness, a vague softening of syllables into each other, — so that *silance* and *ilance* would really sound very like one another, — and so would *chil-drin* and *bewildrin* — *bacchantes* and *grant-es*, don't you see?"

This brings me to the question of Versification — an art quite fixed if we keep to the old classic system of counting feet, or syllables, — but a most eel-like, chameleon-like, chromatic sprite and sylphid, when, boldly diverging from the old, well-known tracks and measurements, poets take to the spiritual guidance of "airy voices" dictating euphonious accents, pauses, beats of time, wavy lifts and pulsations, often not amenable to any laws except those of musical utterance and emotion. These varied measures, numbers, utterances, when an attempt is made to force them within the confines of special laws, are very apt, in many instances, to find their spirit

evaporate, and nothing but a *caput mortuum* remaining in its place. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in forming a settled judgment of these new forms of versification arises from the fact that one good ear will frequently be found to differ from another good ear, with regard to the effect of the same rhythmic music. In short, one can *read it* musically, and another can not.

Before proceeding with Miss Barrett's letters on general topics, it will not be irrelevant here to touch upon the question of Versification with reference chiefly to herself, and incidentally to the Laureate and one or two other poets, commencing, of necessity, with Chaucer.

It has been seen that Miss Barrett was a true admirer and student of the Father of English Poetry; but from the influence of early habit, it seems probable that his admirable variations of the euphony of heroic couplets, so as to correct the monotony of their ten-syllable regularity and systematic pauses, were not specially noticed by her, unless, in some cases, as objectionable. The method

276 LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS.

adopted by Chaucer to obtain variety of harmony in this measure was not, however, so much with respect to the position of pauses and accents in the line, as in the rhythmical embodiment of an eleventh syllable. He also, on special occasions, breaks up the couplet-system, by ending a poetical paragraph with the first word of the rhyme and a full stop; and then takes it up again, with its proper rhyme in the first line of the next poetical division or paragraph. Two or three examples of the former will make the principle clear: —

“He mote be dedde — a king as well as a page,”
etc. *The Knight's Tale.*

“I speake of many an hundred year ago,” etc.
Wife of Bath's Tale.

“Thy temple in Delphos wol I barfote seke,” etc.
The Frankelin's Tale.

“At Orliaunch in studie a booke he seie,” etc.
Ibid.

“Where was your pitie, O people mercillesse,” etc.
Lamentation of Mary Magdaine.

“Her nose directed straight, and even as line,”
etc. *The Court of Love.*

With these, and similar variations, the poems of Chaucer abound. Read in accordance with the early training of most of us, the reader will exclaim — “It won’t come in!” Of course it will not; but the foregoing lines will all be found perfectly harmonious if the words which cause the difficulty are treated like a *turn* in music, so that they come “trippingly” off the tongue. Thus, “as well as,” being read *as well’s* — “many an,” *man’y’n* — “temple in,” *templ’in*, — “studie a,” *studi’a*, — “pitie, O people,” *piti’-o-peopl’*, — “even as,” *ev’nas*, etc. These *harmonious variations*¹ were dropped

¹ As a somewhat extreme illustration, I hope the following anecdote will be pardoned. “I notice,” said Tennyson (this was long before he became Poet Laureate), “that you have a number of lines in ‘Orion’ which are not amenable to the usual scanning.” “True; but they can all be scanned by the same number of beats of time.” “Well, how then do you scan — mind, I don’t object to it — but how do you scan —

‘The long, gray, horizontal wall of the dead-calm sea’?”

Now, as this was the only instance of such a line, the engineer fancied he was about to be “hoist with his own petard;” however, he proposed to do it thus:—

The | long | gray | hori | zont’l | wall | o’ the | dead | calm | sea.

by nearly all the poets during many years after Chaucer.

In *lyrical* verse, and especially in the octosyllabic measure, the first great innovator — not precisely the discoverer, but certainly the first great master — was Coleridge. In the “Vision of Pierce Ploughman,” in Lidgate’s and several other old English and Scottish Ballads, similar musical variations occur, but apparently without intention, and by happy inspiration, though not with the numerous forms of variety introduced by Coleridge. It is said that he once exclaimed with glee — “They all think they are reading eight syllables, — and every now and then they read

It could easily be put into an Alexandrine line; and, by a different arrangement of the beats of time, the line might even be brought into eight beats: —

Thú | lóng | gray | hóri | sónt’l | wáll-o’ the | deíd-cálm | éé.

The poet smiled, and apparently accepted the scanning — at any rate the first one. Some of the variations, however, subsequently introduced by Leigh Hunt in his beautiful play of “The Legend of Florence,” would have to be tried, like those of Beaumont and Fletcher, by yet more unorthodox principles of harmony.

nine, eleven, and thirteen, without being aware of it."

To come at once to our own time. The peculiar variety which we have been discussing scarcely ever occurs in any of Miss Barrett's earlier poems; but latterly it is to be found in "Aurora Leigh: "

" Or, as noon and night
Had clapped together, and utterly struck out
The intermediate time, undoing themselves
In the act." *Book III.*

"Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get."

Ibid.

"So, happy and unafraid of solitude," etc. — *Ibid.*

"Except in fable and figure: forests chant," etc.

Ibid.

"To a pure white line of flame, more luminous
Because of obliteration, more intense,
The intimate presence carrying in itself."

Book IX.

It is possible that some readers may not have been prepared for this; and still less for the same Chaucerian variation (which many persons may have fancied rough and anti-

quoted, merely from having being trained to a regular syllabic mode of reading) to be found continually, and, of course, gracefully, adopted by the Laureate. Here are three or four illustrations taken quite at random, or quite as much so as usual with such takings: —

“He crept into the shadow: at last he said,” etc.

Enoch Arden.

“How merry they are down yonder in the wood,”

etc.

Ibid.

“Had rioted his life out, and made an end.”

Aylmer's Field.

“Strike thro' a finer element than her own?” *Ibid.*

“Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,” etc.

Ibid.

“And oxen from the city and goodly sheep,” etc.

Trans. Iliad

“Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed.”

*Ibid.*¹

¹ In the above specimen of a translation from the Iliad—truly a model for all future translators—those who like to have as close a translation of a great poet's words as can be poetically given, will feel surprised at the Laureate's preference for—

“And champing golden grain, the horses stood
Hard by their chariots, waiting for the dawn,”

The "Experiments" (in versification) published by the Laureate at the end of the volume containing "Enoch Arden" and "Aylmer's Field," should be studied by all who take an interest in the progress of English poetry in these respects. "Boödicea" will be regarded as a success after a second reading, and the poem on "Milton" (in Alcaics) at once. Somehow, it seems to be precisely the right kind of measure to adopt with regard to Milton. The hendecasyllabics

instead of his more literal —

"And eating *hoary* grain and *pules*, the steeds
Stood by their cars, waiting the throne'd morn."

The first is of the usual sort, and has nothing of the close truth of the description of the dry *mealy* corn, together with the green herbage. Also the word "chariots" instead of "cars" has lost us the grand suggestion of the embattled host looking upward to Eos on her throne, an hour or so afterwards! The very same kind of error is committed by Mr. Gladstone, who prefers giving the common-place "*sharp-tipped* lance," to the original "*copper-tipped*" (see "Cont. Rev.," Feb., 1874). For what possible reason, of a good kind, should we not have that piece of insight into the arms and armorer's work of the Homeric age? Besides, the very fact of the lances being tipped with copper, will account for many a man's life being saved by the point turning before it had passed through his shield or breast-plates.

will require more readings than may be consonant with an admission of success in a meter of Catullus. Still, there are some lines which at least render the cause quite hopeful. Canon Kingsley's "Andromeda" is also a meritorious experiment.

The variations derived from the octosyllabic measure of the old ballads, as brought to perfection by Coleridge, and carried into other perfections, I submit, by Tennyson, and lastly by Swinburne, have now been, more or less, adopted by lyrical poets in general, — by some as conscious students and followers, by others from the almost unconscious influence which leading spirits invariably exercise upon contemporaries of less originality and power. In the variation upon the octosyllabic measure we may observe several who have been very successful, more especially among poetesses — from Jean Ingelow, "Sadie," and Miss Rossetti, to the last appearances in the lyrical form, of Jeanie Morrison (Mrs. Campbell, of Ballochyle), and Mrs. Emily Pfeiffer; the two last-named ladies running

most gracefully into several melodious measures as by a spontaneous impulse, as if indeed they never had any more thought of the classical terms and technicalities, or of the various laws of the art, than the bird on the bough, who "warbles away," with no idea of such things as crotchets and quavers, *appoggiaturas* and the *nachschlag*—the trochaic or the iambic—the dactylic, anapæstic, or amphibrachic rhythm.

Some indication has already been afforded of the extensive reading of Miss Barrett in ancient and modern literature, and also that sort of popular reading known as "light literature," or "fiction," which includes not only the outpouring of "seasonable" stuff that often disgraces the period, but works of real depth of thought and inventive genius. A very pregnant comment is made by the lady in our next letter, on the injury of reading more than is good for you, of which she herself was an instance.

LVII.

"December 20th, 1843.

"Yes, my dear Mr. Horne, — I can not refuse what you require, and the more especially as you do not require any systematic review, and as the filling up will rest with you. Nevertheless it is positively true that I am so full of business that papa would laugh at me if he stood near; he who always laughs whenever I say 'I am busy,' — laughs like Jove with superior merriment. As if people could possibly be busy with rhymes and butterflies' wings!

"A volume full of MSS. had been ready for more than a year, when suddenly, a short time ago, when I fancied I had no heavier work than to make copy and corrections, I fell upon a fragment of a sort of mask on 'The First Day's Exile from Eden,' — or rather, it fell upon me, and beset me till I would finish it. I can not tell you even now whether I shall end by printing it, — only if I do print it, it must take a first place in the book, — so that every thing has come to a stand until it is finished, and I decide. From

the twenty lines I found. I have run into a thousand already — blank verse and lyric intermixtures, and in the dramatic form; — a mask, I shall call it; — and after all, nobody in the world may ever see it except myself; and I *reserve* my judgment on it. The object is the development of the peculiar anguish of Eve — the fate of woman at its root — and the first step of Humanity into the world-wilderness, driven by the Curse. You know Milton leaves the first parents in Eden; through Eden they ‘take their solitary way.’ I meet them flying along the great sword-glare! Then, I have Voices of Eden, Spirits in farewell, and lyrical reproaches of Spirits of the Earth and Animal nature. The wanderers find themselves in an earthly zodiac — Shadows of fallen life answering to the starry Shapes of those twelve signs, of which Orion knows — and terrifying the Exiles in the desert, when the first exile-sun has gone down, with a vision of future desolation. At last, Christ appearing, pacifies and reconciles, — and the Heavenly zodiac

shining out, chases the Earthly one underneath, and leaves nothing but the starlight on the ground.

“This is a sketch — not very definite. Besides, there is a Satan, and an angel Gabriel, and some choral angels. Tell me how it strikes you? Is it likely to be aught, or nought? It is better in the doing than in the saying — as I have said it here — but still I doubt. The principal interest is set on Eve; the ‘first in the transgression.’ ‘First in the *transgression*’ has been said over and over again, because of the tradition, — but *first* and *deepest in the sorrow*, nobody seems to have said, or, at least, written of, as conceiving.

“All this you have led me unaware into ruffling you with — perhaps. When I began to write to-day, I did not think to say any more of myself than the earnest thanks with which I overflow, for your great kindness in considering what was best for me, and trying to compass it. In despair of having a proof, I have almost a mind to send you a MS. lyrical poem, which is short enough and happy enough

to have had some MS. reputation, because Mr Kenyon took it into his head that it was 'the best thing I ever wrote, or ever should write' (which isn't true, I hope), and chaperoned it about wherever his kindness could reach. It is a *contra* to Schiller's 'Gods of Greece,' and I make amends for having the worst of the poetry, by having the best of the argument.

"With many thanks I return the proof.¹ It is excellent indeed; and there is a passage about Douglas Jerrold which is full of beauty. You will see marked, at the beginning, where I differ from you on the subject of the employment of wit in *satire*, which department of poetry you certainly seem to overlook. All the great satirists have been 'on virtue's side,' or on what they took for virtue's; and if they sometimes struck the lash out recklessly, it is no argument against their having generally an intention. Satire in its old form of uses, by the way, seems to have died out of our literature — I mean poetical satire. Who would read a 'Dunciad' now? or even a 'golden

¹ Of "A New Spirit of the Age," see Section III., *passim*

book' of Juvenal — if Juvenal were here to write another?

"So you think I never read Fonblanque or Sydney Smith — or Junius, perhaps? Mr. Kenyon calls me his 'omnivorous cousin.' I read without principle. I have a sort of unity indeed, but it amalgamates instead of selecting, — do you understand? When I had read the Hebrew Bible, from Genesis to Malachi, right through, and was never stopped by the Chaldee — and the Greek poets, and Plato, right through from end to end — I passed as thoroughly through the flood of all possible and impossible British and foreign novels and romances, with slices of metaphysics laid thick between the sorrows of the multitudinous Celestinas. It is only useful knowledge and the multiplication-table I never tried hard at. And now — what now? Is this matter of exultation? Alas, no! Do I boast of my omnivorousness of reading, even apart from the romances? Certainly no! — never, except in joke. It's against my theories and ratiocinations, which take upon themselves to assert

that we *all* generally err by *reading too much*, and out of proportion to what we *think*. I should be wiser, I am persuaded, if I had not read half as much — should have had stronger and better exercised faculties, and should stand higher in my own appreciation. The fact is, that the *ne plus ultra* of intellectual indolence is this reading of books. It comes next to what the Americans call ‘whittling.’

“By the way, did you receive Mr. Cornelius Mathews’s book? and ‘what is your thought like?’

“Yes, the essay in this proof is excellent. Still, it does strike me that you raise Douglas Jerrold a little above his natural level, and depreciate Fonblanque and Sydney Smith a little below theirs, by classing the three together — him with them, I mean. And then, — is Fonblanque praised enough for the most brilliant writer in Europe? — for his power both argumentative and epigrammatic? — and especially for his unequalled adroitness in literary allusion and quotation? His wit covers as many sins as his charity might: and

if I were Lord Brougham, I believe that I should think so still.

“ Could it be possible to strengthen an expression or two in respect to Fonblanque? — or impossible? — or undesirable? ”

“ Then, I doubt, notwithstanding my carpings at the Stricklands and Stickneys, whether you should not put their names into your book after all. They have a certain popularity — more popularity perhaps than if they had genius, — and both of them deserve praise in their departments. Besides, Agnes Strickland stands on the high ground of history, to claim your attention; and Sarah Stickney is the actual Mrs. Ellis (or I am mistaken) who gives twelve editions of instructions to the ‘ Women,’ ‘ Wives,’ ‘ Daughters ’ (and ‘ Grandmothers,’ says ‘ Punch ’), of our common England. Now, albeit you may opine, in your secret soul, that the race of Mrs. Ellis’s disciples runs the risk of being model-women of the most abominable virtue, you can’t help, I think, in the mean time, without exposing your work to a charge of imperfec-

tion, making mention of a voluminous female writer who has carried books through a dozen or more editions. Judge if you can help it. Also, it seems to me that you should mention Miss Lawrence, and certainly Miss Costello, who is a highly accomplished woman, and full of grace and sense of beauty. Mrs. Ellis is a poetess, by courtesy — are you aware? And looking over a book-catalogue this morning, I saw Agnes Strickland's name attached to a 'Demetrius, and other Poems,' whereof I never heard before.

"Have you a portrait of Mrs. Somerville? I hope so.

"So, this Reverend Robert Montgomery is to have stripes instead of honor. Well, the false gods should be put down.

"I send the paper on Milnes.

"Truly yours,

"E. B. B.

"Mrs. Orme says, 'If you write soon to Mr. Horne, tell him that I am better, and that I have the guitar.'"

The lady referred to was a particular friend of Miss Barrett's, who resided within a few doors of Leigh Hunt's house at Kensington. The guitar had been sent to her first, to be passed on to Leigh Hunt, as he had often expressed a great wish to put words to a certain minuet, composed by Sor, in which a peculiar blending of elegance and melancholy had much impressed him. But although it was played to him every evening, the next time I was on a visit in that neighborhood, he could never satisfy himself with the words he wanted. His musical sensibilities were evidently without any definite ideas in this case, and he had too true a feeling and taste to substitute mere euphonious words for his more delicate apprehensions. He had intended them, when composed, for Sir Percy Shelley (son of the poet), at that time often visiting Leigh Hunt at Kensington.

LVIII.

"50, WIMPOLE STREET,

"Nov. 7th, 1844.

"As you remind me, Miss Martineau is a

great landmark to show how far a recovery can go. She can walk five miles a day now with ease, and is well, she says — not comparatively well, but well in the strict sense. You may say so in the third edition of your ‘Spirit of the Age.’ Moreover, she has an apocalyptic housemaid (save the mark!) who, being *clairvoyante*, prophesies concerning the anatomical structure of herself and others, and declares ‘awful spiritual dicta’ concerning the soul and the mind and their future destination; discriminating (says Miss Martineau) ‘between what she hears at church and what is true.’ A lively child, whom I once had pastime with, used to rhyme, singing to herself —

‘What will this world come to?

A little bit of glue!’

And really I am inclined to take up the verse when I hear of the loosening of the soul to the end of its tether while it runs into the spiritual world and returns again to this. I am credulous and superstitious, naturally,

and find no difficulty in the *wonder*; only precisely because I believe it, I would not subject myself to this mystery at the will of another, and this induction into things unseen. My blood runs the wrong way to think of it. Is it lawful — or, if lawful, expedient? Do you believe a word of it, or are you skeptical like papa? . . . I have little inclination to depreciate the critics, who have treated me very kindly. Ainsworth, the ‘Metropolitan,’ the ‘New Monthly,’ ‘Tait,’ and ‘Blackwood’ (last and greatest beyond any comparing), have all, according to their measure, been kind and generous to me. For the newspapers, besides those I mentioned, the ‘Examiner’ sounded a clarion for me. I am well pleased altogether, and I have had a long and most kind letter from Harriet Martineau in approbation, and from Mrs. Jameson, and a kind note from Mr. Landor and others. Now I do beseech you, by whatever regard you may feel for me (in which I am ambitious to believe), to write to me a kind letter too — that is, a *sincere* letter. Do not fancy yourself

obliged to write compliments to me—surely our friendship has outgrown such mere green wood. I promise not to enact the Archbishop of Granada if you speak the truth to me. That the books I send you are full of faults, I know. Will you tell me what the chief faults appear to you to be? A remark you once cursorily made to me about deepening my shadows, I hope you will see that I have borne in mind — though more may be yet done in that way. If I did not alter every thing you suggested in ‘Pan,’ I could give you reasons, some literary and some otherwise, which you would not take to be inadequate. Your criticisms will not be thrown away upon me, if you think me worthy of an opinion apart from all conventionalities of a vain courtesy and gallantry, but will be useful long after the pleasure of praise has ceased to touch me. The ‘Drama of Exile,’ the longest poem, has been thrown aside by nearly all the official critics as inferior to the rest — and perhaps as a whole it is unsuccessful.

“ ‘Lady Geraldine’s Courtship’ appears to be the popular favorite. Oh for life and strength to do something better and worthier than any of them — I feel as if I could do it.

“Tell me if you are writing. Miss Mitford had the great kindness to come to see me three or four days ago for a few hours, and we had all the gossip possible to women, upon various subjects, you among them. She is looking well, and full of her old vivacity, so charming, because no one knows distinctly whether it comes from the head or heart. She did not tell me that she had heard from you, — and I didn’t tell her that I had heard from you. We couldn’t, you know. We ‘reasoned high’ as to whether you might not have fallen low — completing your descent down the Drachenfels, and explaining your silence.”

The next letter has no date, but internal evidence shows that it was written some time in 1844, and has reference to the portraits in “A New Spirit of the Age.” It is valuable as displaying the opinion of one learned lady

of another learned lady of her own day, viz., Sara Coleridge.

LIX.

“ Thank you, my dear Mr. Horne ; you are kinder than kind. I am delighted with the engravings, and shall have the poets (at least Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, Talfourd) framed, and hung up in this room. I only wish the editor had been one of them.

“ No more superfluous words, and thank you again.

“ E. B. B

“ *Wednesday.* By the way, or rather out of the way, I hope I did not seem to infer any disrespect to Sara Coleridge in a general remark made in my letter yesterday. I forgot her while I wrote it. She is not a poet — she does not pretend to the faculty — but she has a lively fancy, as she has expressed it in her prose fairy-tale, and possesses perhaps more learning, in the strict sense, than any female writer of the day. A theological essay, in

appendix to the late edition of her father's philosophical works, is remarkable for its erudition, and its calm and candid ratiocination. A little wire-drawn, but of sturdy metal. I have a high respect for Mrs. Coleridge.

"And you will please to recollect, Mr. Horne, that when I talk of women, I do not speak of them (as many men do, and as perhaps you yourself are somewhat inclined to do) according to a separate, peculiar, and womanly standard, but according to the common standard of human nature.

"There is a postscript scarcely proportionate to the antescrypt!"

The following fragment of a letter written about this time has special reference to one of my books for children, either "The London Doll,"¹ or "The Good-natured Bear" (both recently republished by Strahan).

LX.

" . . . I liked your child's book, and

¹ See Section III., pp. 188-9.

recognized in it, every here and there, some divine faint starlight from 'Orion.' But there is one great omission. There is a sense of God in the mind of every child, and to this you do not respond. Doctrinal instruction is out of the question; but the sense of God, that instinctive aspiration of the child's mind, should not be met with silence and vacancy in the mind of the teacher. Now there is my sermon and criticism for you, both in one, if you will accept them so."

Having only occasionally had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Jameson, I should have felt diffident in venturing to bring her upon the scene. Fortunately this can be done by a better hand, Mrs. Jameson having visited Miss Barrett during her period of seclusion. The date of the following letter appears to be Dec. 3, 1844:—

LXI.

"Not a sound — not a sign! . . . Tell me, for I do long to hear what is called now-a-

days the 'real mesmeric truth.' 'Οτοτοτοί— in English we have nothing complaining enough, though we are said, here in England, to have the spirit of grumbling. . . .

"Since I wrote last I have seen Miss Mitford again, and I have lately received her promise of an early visit. That is, she will come as she did before, for what poor 'L. E. L.' used to call the 'super-felicity of talking,' and stay with me from noon-tide to seven o'clock, P.M. Also I have seen Mrs. Jameson, . . . and she overcame at last by sending a note to me from the next house — 51, Wimpole Street. Do you know her? She did not exactly reflect my idea of Mrs. Jameson. And yet it would be both untrue and ungrateful to tell you that she disappointed me. In fact she agreeably surprised me in one respect, for I had been told that she was *pedantic*, and I found her as unassuming as a woman need be — both unassuming and natural. The tone of her conversation, however, is rather analytical and critical than spontaneous and impulsive, and for this reason she appears to

me a less charming companion than our friend of Three Mile Cross, who 'wears her heart upon her sleeve,' and shakes out its perfumes at every moment. She — Mrs. Jameson — is keen and calm, and reflective. She has a very light complexion — pale, lucid eyes — thin colorless lips, fit for incisive meanings — a nose and chin projective without breadth. She was here nearly an hour, and though on a first visit, I could perceive that a vague thought or expression she would not permit to pass either from my lips or her own. Yet nothing could be greater than her kindness to me, and I already think of her as of a friend.

"Miss Martineau is astounding the world with mesmeric statements through the *medium* of the 'Athenæum' — and yet, it happens, so that I believe few converts will be made by her. The medical men have taken up her glove brutally — as dogs might do — dogs, exclusive of my Flush, who is a gentleman.

"Well, have you received my poems? In the 'Pan' you will observe that I accepted certain of your suggestions, and neglected

others — neglected some because I did not agree with you, and some because I could not follow my own wishes. In fact, or rather by fantasy, that poem seemed to me to belong to Mr. Kenyon. In various manners, past describing, he has lavished so much interest and kindness on it, and on me through it, that he seemed to me to have all the rights of adoption. He wanted various things altered, which I altered for the most part. Here and there, however, I was obliged to resist — though not without pain. And when I proposed having the Greek names (on which point I do altogether in my inward soul agree with you), he spurned the idea of turning Jove into Zeus, and I had not the courage to stand by my arms.

“ . . . The volumes are succeeding, past any expectation or hope of mine. ‘Blackwood’s’ high help was much, and ‘Tait’s’ not unavailing. Then I continue to have letters of the kindest, from unknown readers. I had a letter yesterday from the remote region of Gutter Lane, beginning, ‘I thank

thee!’ . . . The American publisher has printed fifteen hundred copies. If I am a means of ultimate loss to him, I shall sit in sackcloth. . . .

“I have not heard a word from Leigh Hunt. . . . I am grateful enough to him as it is, having, in addition to all former causes of gratitude, the present delight of reading his new critical work upon poetry. The most delightful and genial of poetical critics he is assuredly. Not that I always agree with him. I have it in my head, for instance, that he knows Ben Jonson somewhat superficially, — and underrates his lyrics immensely,¹ and accepts the popular prejudice about his ‘jealousy,’ etc., even blindly. Is there a poet of England, new or old, who has written so much praise of his contemporaries as Ben Jonson? I know not. Does that fact prove jealousy in him? I infer not. Then, Beaumont and Fletcher he is niggardly in selections from, and for a reason I do not admit, for he says

¹ The above was written before Leigh Hunt had published all his remarks on Ben Jonson.

that it is impossible to quote a passage longer than a very short one without falling upon matter of offense. Respectfully, I abjure the reasonableness of such a reason. Then, again, I seriously am of opinion that even if he rejects, . . . he might, out of the broad sympathy of a poet's heart, have had patience with Milton's divinity, as another form of mythology. There may be sectarianism in the very cutting off of sectarianism. I am sorry (very) for some things said, and some things left unsaid, in the paper on Milton — for instance, the omission of one of the very noblest odes in the English language (that on the Nativity), because — it is not on the birth of Bacchus! Objections like these apart, the book is, however, a beautiful book, and will be a companion to me for the rest of my life. My brother George gave it to me as the most acceptable gift in the world. Talking of books of poetry, tell me the name of the poem you are writing. My American friends ask about your 'Gregory,' 'Cosmo,' and 'Marlowe,' and want to naturalize them a little more.

“ Mr. Tennyson is quite well again, I understand. Wordsworth is in a fever about the railroad which people are going to drive through the middle of the Lake School. So excited was he, that his wife persuaded him to go from home for a time, and *compose* his mind. He went, like an obedient husband — but he has come back again with ten fevers instead of one — and the time of his absence he spent in canvassing for Members of Parliament who would not say ‘ ay ’ to it. Fifty have promised, he says, to protect him — although Monckton Milnes, having caught corruption from the Utilitarians, dares to oppose the master-poet front to front, and sonnet to sonnet. Mr. Browning has not returned to England yet.

“ And then I hear that Carlyle won’t believe in mesmerism, and calls Harriet Martineau *mad*. ‘ The madness showed itself first in the refusal of the pension — next, in the resolution that, the universe being desirous of reading her letters, the universe should be disappointed — and thirdly, in this creed of

mesmerism.' I wish (if he ever did use such words) somebody would tell him that the first manifestation, at least, was of a noble frenzy, which in these latter days is not too likely to prove contagious. For my own part, I am not afraid to say that I almost believe in mesmerism, and quite believe in Harriet Martineau.

"May God bless you, my dear friend. Take care of yourself, and be very happy.

"E. B. BARRETT."

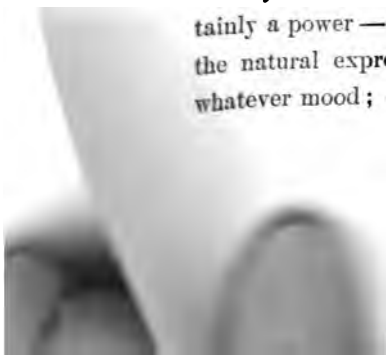
LXII.

"50, WIMPOLE STREET,

"May 12th, 1845.

.

"Your friend, Mr. Poe, is a speaker of strong words 'in both kinds.' But I hope you will assure him from me that I am grateful for his reviews, and in no complaining humor at all. As to the 'Raven' tell me what you shall say about it! There is certainly a power — but it does not appear to me the natural expression of a sane intellect in whatever mood; and I think that this should



be specified in the title of the poem. There is a fantasticalness about the 'sir or madam,' and things of the sort, which is ludicrous, unless there is a specified insanity to justify the straws. Probably he—the author—intended it to be read in the poem, and he ought to have intended it. The rhythm acts excellently upon the imagination, and the 'nevermore' has a solemn chime with it. Don't get me into a scrape. The 'pokerishness' (just gods! what Mohawk English!) might be found fatal, peradventure. Besides,—just because I have been criticised, I would not criticise. And I am of opinion that there is an uncommon force and effect in the poem.

"I am delighted at the prospect of 'Orion's' being republished in New York. I love the Americans, and think they deserve your 'Orion.' A noble and cordial people, for all their 'pokerishness'—save the mark! But Mr. Poe seems to me in a great mist on the subject of meter. You yourself have skipped all the philosophy of the subject in your excellent treatise on 'Chaucer Mode n-

ized,' and you shut your ears when I tried to dun you about it one day. But Chaucer wrote on precisely the same principles (eternal principles) as the Greek poets did, I believe unalterably; and you, who are a musician, ought to have sung it out loud in the ears of the public. There is no 'pedantic verbiage' in Longinus. But Mr. Poe, who attributes the 'Œdipus Coloneus' to Æschylus (*vide* review on me), sits somewhat loosely, probably, on his classics.

"Yours truly ever,

"F. B. B."

LXIII.

"50, WIMPOLE STREET,

"September 29th, 1845.

"Do let me hear from you, dear Mr. Horne, and quickly, as my foot is in the air — balanced on the probability of a departure from England, — for some land of the sun yet in the clouds — Italy perhaps, Madeira possibly; there to finish my recovery, or rather to prevent my yearly *rechute* in the wintry cold — so let me hear from you quickly. It seems

long since I have heard from you — and I listen in vain for your ballad book, and for other pleasant sounds of you which always must be three times welcome to me. I am likely to go very soon if at all — the uncertainty is dominant, — and I have been long and continue still in great vexation and perplexity from this doubtfulness. . . . If I go to Italy it will be by sea, and high authorities among the doctors promise me an absolute restoration in consequence of it — and I myself have great courage and hope when I do not look *beyond myself*. I have been drinking life at the sun all this summer (and *that* is why the fountains of it have seemed so dry to you and the rest of the world), but, though in improved health and courage, I am sometimes a very Jacques for melancholy, and go moralizing into a thousand similes half the uses of the day. Mr. Mathews has sent me his ‘Abel.’ Do you know any one who will review it with a justice leaning to mercy’s side? I wish I could do something for it, as the writer is so anxious for the fate of it here in England, and has

been kind to me. Miss Mitford proposed kindly coming to see me before I left England, but I have no spirits just now to make farewells of. When I set up my Republic against Plato's, nobody shall say good-by in it except the 'good haters' one to another.

"Now I do hope to hear of your prosperity as soon as possible. Is your American edition of 'Orion' out, as Mr. Poe announced it?

"Always believe me, dear Mr. Horne,

"Faithfully and gratefully yours,

"E. B. B."

LXIV.

"Monday [no other date — 1846].

"I thank you, my dear Mr. Horne, for your kindness in the gift of your 'Ballad Romances,' and for all the pleasure I have had in the work. 'The Monk of Swineshead Abbey,' and the 'Three Knights,' and the unforgotten 'Delora,' strike different keys, and are all three deep with various music. The 'Monk' is very vigorous and significant, and in the 'Three Knights' I like your satyr

who swears by his horn, and your giant who wakes 'like a giant from his slumbers' and swears like the same. What I like least in the volume — now, you know, I always persist in telling the truth — is the Elf-story, though I enjoy the beginning and the end just as you would have me. But — but — I eschew Grandmamma Guy and her night-cap and 'the small boy' — who is not 'the small boy' — entirely, *for machinery*; it is no right machinery for the elves, in my mind, and I say what I think. The familiar and the supernatural are brought too close together, perhaps — 'shoetye' and 'blue sky,' as you say in your Apocrypha. Now look at Drayton's tale of 'The Fairies' — how pure and musical that is! I hold that a Grandmamma Guy would never have sight of a real elf, let her put on her spectacles ever so! The opening of the poem has great beauty, and so has the close of it, as I said and must say again. And that surprises me that you should allow yourself to wander from the keynote after the fashion you choose.

“But the monks — but the knights — oh we must all thank you for these things just as I do. And Ben Capstan has vigor and meaning too, only that I object a little to his Doric, which is not sweet Doric, and take the liberty of thinking it unlawful. Scotch is lawful. But I should object to *Zummerzetshire*! I, for one. And I should object to Cockneyism *a fortiori*. Wrong, perhaps! But I tell you the truth.

“And so you go to Ireland. Do you go directly, and is it a prospect which pleases you? I wish you the most satisfying of successes in the dirt of politics, and hands still white for the Muses.

“May God bless you, for this year and other years. Success to this book especially.

“If you could see what a tangle my thoughts are in, you would smile.

“Ever most truly and gratefully your friend,

“ELIZABETH B. BARRETT

“What a beautiful image *that* is in illustration of the transiency of life, —

LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS. 313

'The shadow of the windmill sails
Across yon slope of sunny green.'

It strikes me much."

LXV.

"PISA, Dec. 4.

"DEAR HORNE, — Your good, kind, loyal letter gave me all the pleasure you meant it should. I mean to 'answer' it ere long; but as my wife wants to send a letter by an inclosure I am now getting ready for this evening. I could not help shaking your hand, through the long interval of Italian air, and saying, if only in a line, that I know your friendliness, and honor your genius as much as ever. One of these days we shall meet again, never fear — and then you shall see my wife, your old friend, and hear from her what I have often heard from her, and what, perhaps, the note tells you. She has long been wanting to send it. She is getting better every day, — stronger, better wonderfully, and beyond all our hopes. It is pleasant living here. Why do you not come and try? This street

314 LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS.

we live in terminates with the Palace in which
your Cosmo killed his son.

“ Ever yours faithfully, as of old,

“R. BROWNING.”

LXVI.

“PISA, COLLEGIO FERDINANDO, Dec. 4th.

“ At last you see, my dear Mr. Horne, I am writing to you, and if I could but, while I write, with a breath dispel all my misdeeds against you, I should be glad, believe me. But the truth has made itself apparent to you, I hope — that my silence and backwardness of late have been all parts of any thing but an unkind feeling to you — of a difficult position of my own, indeed, which it was scarcely possible to move in without the risk of falling from it. If I had seen you, for instance, in the course of the last two years, you would have seen what I wished you not to see — not through distrust of *you*, as you may suppose. I have been tied and bound — I could not help myself. Then, in not answering you

last Dublin note,¹ I knew I should be away when you returned, and I could not say so, and I did not choose to leave our Chaucer [?] and send you a 'double' letter for another end than the postage. You had deserved better from me, and I had it in my head to write to you to another effect just before my marriage, which I did not do, precisely because the head whirled and whirled. Our plans were made up at the last in the utmost haste and agitation — precipitated beyond all intention. Now you will forgive me, and try to think of me as I have never ceased to be, as your friend in the truest sense. I have a good deal surprised you, I am certain, though

¹ [Mr. Horne was at this time the special Irish "Commissioner" for the "Daily News," then edited by Charles Dickens. For the purpose of establishing a connection in the "sister isle," Mr. Horne had an office in Dublin, unlimited credit on the resources of the paper, a "sub-editor" and a staff of reporters. This was during the terrible famine, and Mr. Horne traveled to Limerick along the south-west coast of Clare into Galway and the wilds of Connemara for the purpose of sending reports of the actual state of things witnessed by himself. Mr. Dickens's brilliant but brief connection with the "Daily News" is well known. — S. R. T. M.]

you have written to my husband so very kind a note, for which we both gratefully thank you; and perhaps it has struck you that a woman might act more generously than to repay a generous attachment with such a questionable gift and possible burthen as that of uncertain health and broken spirits; to which I can only say that I have been overcome in generosity as in all else, though not without a long struggle in this specific case; also there was the experience that all my maladies came from without, and the hope that if unprovoked by English winters, they would cease to come at all. The mildness of the last exceptional winter had left me a different creature, and the physicians helped me to hope every thing from Italy. So you see how it all ended. I have been gaining strength every week since we left England; and Mrs. Jameson, who met us in Paris and traveled to Pisa with us, called me at the end of six weeks, notwithstanding all the emotion and fatigue, 'rather transformed than improved.' She has now gone to Florence,

and we are left to ourselves in a house built by Vasari, and within sight of the Leaning Tower and the Duomo, to enjoy a most absolute seclusion and plan the work fit for it. I am very happy and very well. Pisa was recommended to me for its climate, and, besides, is a good beginning of Italy, both for language and art. We have heard a mass (a musical mass for the dead) in the Campo Santo, and achieved a due pilgrimage to the Lanfranchi Palace to walk in the footsteps of Byron and Shelley, and also of Leigh Hunt. He inhabited, I think, the ground-floor. Then, a statue of your Cosmo looks down from one of the great piazzas we often pass through, on purpose to remind us of you. This city is very beautiful and full of repose, — ‘asleep in the sun,’ — as Dickens said for the best word of his ‘Letters from Italy.’ What are you doing, and where going? Shall we hear? Whenever there shall be means of seeing you again, be sure that I shall not talk of *hearing* rather — except the guitar should tempt!

"Think of me, dear Mr. Horne, as always,
most truly and gratefully your friend,

"ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING."

LXVII.

[Same date.]

"We were reading your letter, my dear Mr. Horne, together, on our little terrace—walking up and down and reading it—I mean the letter to Robert—and then, at the end, suddenly turning, lo, just at the edge of the stones, just between the balustrades, and already fluttering in a breath of wind and about to fly away over San Felice's church, we caught a glimpse of the feather of a note to E. B. B. How near we were to the loss of it, to be sure! And it would have been a great loss, notwithstanding all that she seems to deserve ill of you, scarce deserved by a friend of yours who holds you in unalterable regard. But could it indeed be true that we did not answer your letter before? Now, surely we did answer it. I can't make up my mind to plead guilty to such a charge of negligence, and I seem to remember the very

paper I wrote upon, my husband first, and then I. Think again whether you did not get such a letter? — Well! — it does not much matter now. What I want *now* to speak of is the deep sympathy with which we both listen to all you tell us of yourself — so characteristic, and not the less admirable for *that*! May I not say so, my dear friend? If we were in England, perhaps we should have to make out life with mustard and cress, too — the only vegetable I was ever distinguished for the cultivation of! Cabbages and potatoes grew so much too slowly for me that they were always dug up to make place for something more active. Here we live for nothing, or next to nothing, and have great rooms, and tables and chairs thrown in, — and although hearing occasionally that Florence is to be sacked on such a day, and our Grand Duke deposed on such another, I have learnt to endure meekly all such expectations, and to hold myself as safe as you in your garden, through them all. One thing is certain — that the Italians won't spoil their best sur-

touts by venturing out in a shower of rain through whatever burst of revolutionary ardor, nor will they forget to take their ices through loading of their guns. So I am as brave — as brave — as the Pope isn't. My husband bids me remember to tell you how he rushed away from Florence in June in order to be cooler, and went to *Ancona*, prudent people that we were, leaping right into the caldron. The heat was just the fiercest fire of your imagination, and I *seethe* to think of it at this distance. But we saw the whole coast, from Ravenna to Loretto, and had wonderful visions of beauty and glory in passing and repassing the Apeanines. At Ravenna we stood one morning at four, at Dante's tomb, with its pathetic inscription, and seldom has any such sight so moved me. Ravenna is a dreary, marshy place, with a dead weight of melancholy air fading the faces of its inhabitants; and its pine forest stands off too far to redeem it anywise. That Lord Byron should have praised it, is just a token of the spells of the Guiccioli — who has revolutionized,

you see — like the rest of the world — into a Mme. de Boissy. Some one told us the other day that she was ‘still very beautiful.’ How I long to see your ‘Judas,’ with the appended poems. The subject was a daring one, and admmissive of the finest things. All I complain of at Florence is the difficulty of getting sight of new books, which I, who have been used to a new ‘sea-serpent’ every morning, in the shape of a French romance, care still more for than my husband does. Old books we can arrive at; and besides, our own are coming over the sea. Oh, but we haven’t given up England altogether — we talk of spending summers there, and have a scheme of seeing you all next year, if circumstances should permit of it. Thank you in the mean time for intending to write to us, and tell us every thing about books and men. For you do intend it, don’t you? I thank you beforehand to make sure of it. In particular, I want you to tell us of yourself. So used am I to be grateful to you that it scarcely can be a strange thing to read those most kind words

in which you promise a welcome to my husband's poems, — only you will believe that kindness in that shape must touch me nearest. God bless you, dear friend. I am as ever, and most truly yours,

“ E. B. B.

“ Dear Miss Mitford has been much less well than usual, I do fear. But it does not appear to be a dangerous indisposition. You, who take courage always, will keep it. The day for thinkers and writers, and only for those, is breaking fast.”

LXVIII. LONDON, September 24th [1851].

“ MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I am writing this for Robert as well as for myself. We leave England for Paris to-morrow, and as you made no sign we concluded that you were still at Broadstairs,¹ and did not pay you our visit. I am vexed to have to go without seeing you again. We send by the Parcels Delivery Company to your address, dear

¹ With Dickens.

LAST LETTERS ON GENERAL TOPICS. 329

friend, the new editions of our works, and the last new poems. We wish you to have them for friendship's sake, and remain in all affectionateness of thoughts and wishes, your faithful,

“ROBERT AND ELIZABETH

“BARRETT BROWNING.

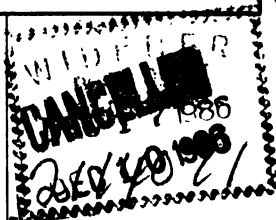
“The above are literally my last words written in England, I think. You will write to us, won't you, sometimes? Send any letter to New Cross, till we have a fixed address in Paris.”



This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.



23438.31.20 vol.1

Letters addressed to Richard Hengis

Widener Library

002947079



3 2044 086 844 644